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ABSTRACT

This volume of an annual journal contains 17 articles that focus on model local offices of the employment security (ES) and training systems. The articles are arranged in three parts. Part I, on developing new initiatives, contains the following five articles: "A Public Employment Service for the 1990s" (Elizabeth Dole); "The Revitalization of the Employment Service: Improving the Employer Relations Program" (Martin Smith); "Coordination Brings LMI and Job Service Together" (Ellen Saunders, Betsey Fettman); "Jobs New Jersey: A Model Concept in Cooperation" (J. Robert White); and "Building on Experience: The Ohio Bureau of Employment Service's Role in JOBS" (Ellen Saunders, Barbara Kaufman). Part II, which concerns local offices that address unique situations, contains five articles: "New Jersey Response Team" (Scott Stryker); "A 24-Hour Job Service" (Diana Staley); "West Virginia: A Leader in Meeting the Needs of Rural America" (Andrew Richardson); "Weslaco: Model Full-Service Office in the Rio Grande Valley" (John Stine); and "One of a Kind" (Bud Cork). The seven articles in Part III focus on creating local office models. They are: "One-Stop Service for Application Taking and Eligibility Determinations for Job Training, Job Placement, and Unemployment Insurance" (Lyle Halvorson); "Community Service Centers: Helping NY Work--Better" (Thomas Hartnett); "The Idaho Story: Model Office Operations--ES, UI, LMI, JTPA" (Tom Valasek); "Employ Illinois: An Economic Development and Human Services Initiative" (Robert Frank); "Job Centers Address Southeastern Pennsylvania's Changing Economy" (Frank Lynch, Jack McGettigan); "Meeting Human Resources Needs: Maryland Job Service Local Office Innovations" (Paulette Hall); and "Model Offices in Model Communities" (A. R. Little). (YLB)

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PERSPECTIVE

Essays and reviews of issues in Employment Security
and employment and training programs

Model Offices:
Flexible Options
Local Innovations

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Vol. 6 **1990**

Perspective: essays and reviews of issues in Employment Security and employment and training programs is published by the International Association of Personnel in Employment Security. The subjects covered in the text are intended to fulfill two of the time-honored objectives of the association: to enhance the individual competence, knowledge and professionalism of members engaged in occupations in the field of Employment Security; and to provide a forum for the exchange of information on Employment Security and its related problems.

The International Association of Personnel in Employment Security is a non-profit, professional association representing individuals employed with federal, state and local govenments and non-profit organizations and working in the employment security and training programs of Job Service, Unemployment Insurance, and Labor Market Information, Job Training Partnership Act and other employment and training programs. Membership is open to anyone interested in employment security and training programs. Members reside and work in more than 40 nations. The association sponsors a full range of scholarship programs, communication vehicles and membership benefit programs.

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Preface

"Order is the sanity of the mind, the health of the body, the peace of the city, the security of the state. As the beams to a house, as the bones to the microcosm of man, so is order to all things.

-- Robert Southey

"We have to invent new approaches to management. . . The successful organization of the future is going to be incredibly flexible."

-- Paul Shay

An old football coach used to bellow, "Organization is the key to success!" Southey's comment testifies to the need to have a sound organization -- order -- to make institutions work. Action on that well-planned order will lead to future achievement, but futurist Paul Shay notes that in these changing times those plans and actions must be in tune with modern realities.

This sixth volume of *Perspective: essays and reviews of issues in Employment Security and employment and training programs* focuses on model local offices of the employment security and training systems. It no longer is enough just to find a person a job; just to pay a benefit check; just to train someone; just to say nice things and send the person home. Local offices must be able to network with the myriad of service providers to offer the services and referrals each person needs. These efforts are taking place throughout the United States, and several are described in this volume, *Model Offices: Flexible Options, Local Innovations*. The employment security and training systems are working to meet the nation's needs, and in the process are developing innovative solutions to problems -- solutions often made both more urgent and harder to implement due to historic and chronic funding shortfalls.

I.A.P.E.S. dedicates this volume of *Perspective* to the professionals in the more than 1,800 local Employment Security offices and the more than 700 Job Training Partnership Act service delivery areas who are striving to give quality service to America's deserving jobless and its employers. The association thanks 1989-90 President Rick Hemming, under whose administration this volume was started, and 1990-91 President Darrell Wallace, under whose administration it was completed. The Research and Institutes Committee chairs who guided production were George Strait, 1989-90, and Don McClung, 1990-91. A special thanks is extended to Gary Crossley, labor market information director, Interstate Conference of Employment Security Agencies, who assisted with the editing and organization of this volume, and W. Scott Boyd, retired I.A.P.E.S. executive director, who proofread the material.

Michael R. Stone
Editor

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Part 1:
Developing New Initiatives

A Public Employment Service for the 1990s

by Elizabeth Dole

The future of the public Employment Service is a vital concern to me as Secretary of Labor, as I am sure it is to the members of the International Association of Personnel in Employment Security. You are on the front lines, helping to meet the needs of America's jobseekers. You have firsthand experience with the system. You know its strengths and weaknesses better than most. So I hope you share my commitment to making ES an effective network prepared to meet the labor market needs of the 1990s.

Today's complex economy demands highly skilled workers. At the same time, we have a shrinking labor pool and shortages in key occupational areas. The sad fact is that many people are unprepared for the labor market realities the nation is facing.

ES placements are only 7 percent of all national hires -- down from 20 percent in 1962 -- and employer use of ES services is far less than it has been or could be. I know few areas of government that have shifted missions more frequently than ES, but I am convinced that right now the American people are not getting enough of a return on the almost $800 million in employer taxes invested in ES each year.

Elizabeth Dole was United States Secretary of Labor at the time this article was submitted for publication.

Increasing labor market efficiencies is a key item on my work force quality agenda. ES reform is an essential part of that item, and I do intend to present reform legislation to Congress.

Your contributions to the reform process have been and will continue to be crucial, as will viewpoints from all those who have an interest or a need in smoothly functioning labor markets.
The responses will help further such reform goals as forging stronger partnerships among employers, unions, schools, community groups, service deliverers under the Job Training Partnership Act, and others -- all tied in with improving labor market efficiencies.

The Agenda

ES reform and other efforts to improve the efficiency of the labor market make up one item in the seven-point work force quality agenda that I outlined in October, 1989. The other points on the agenda:

- **Defining the skills workers need in the work place and ensuring that school graduates can perform them**. In April, I announced formation of the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), with former Labor Secretary Bill Brock as Chair. SCANS is bringing together business, labor, and education leaders to define what skills workers need in order to close the gap between what is learned in school and what workplaces require.

SCANS will define guidelines on the basic skills a student must have in order to be considered work-ready. Using these guidlines, the education community ensure that youth leaving school meet the needs of today's workplaces. I believe this commission will be a valuable resource to the nation in increasing the basic literacy rate and the educational achievement of youth entering the labor market.

- **Assisting youth to move from school to work**. In May, the Department of Labor and the Department of Education cosponsored "The Quality Connection: Linking Education and Work." This conference brought together top employers, union leaders, educators, and training professionals to explore school-to-work strategies, issues and alternatives for correcting work, and classroom learning.

The alternatives include: the work-based "2 + 2" method, which occurs during the last two years of high school and the two years of community college; industry career centers; and the work-based learning system of other countries. The conference report will help state and local communities with their own school-to-work alternatives. In addition, the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration is awarding demonstration grants to test a range of different, promising school-to-work approaches.

- **Enhancing the skills of our current work force**. Advances in technology are making the skills of a large number of current workers obsolete. To help us face this issue squarely, ETA's Office of Work-Based Learning (OWBL) can help American workers increase their skills.

OWBL has awarded three research and demonstration grants to perform such exploration. For example, under one of these grants --

awarded through the National Alliance of Business to the American Bankers Association -- there is multi-site testing of innovative bank teller training whereby performance coaches, usually head tellers, provide participants with structured learning exercises that they can build into their everyday experiences on the job.

We soon will establish a national advisory board on work-based training with representatives from industry, labor, education, and government. Its main goal will be to expand the apprenticeship concept to new industries and occupations. This expansion will result in quality training programs and in portable credentials for workers who complete such training -- that is, credentials they can use throughout the nation. Based on standards developed jointly with industry, the Department of Labor will act as the credentialing agent for this voluntary system of accrediting work-based training programs.

- **Increasing efforts to better use available workers**. With fewer people entering the work force, and thus a tighter labor market, we face a compelling need to make use of all potential workers. To help meet this need, I have directed the department to set up a Workforce Quality Clearinghouse to exchange information with employers and employees on programs that break down barriers to employment. Through this measure, we promote successful employer programs in such crucial workplace areas as child care and elder care, equal pay for equal work, parental leave, and flexible work schedules. As part of this effort, we have set up the toll-free telephone number 800/827-5335 for employers to receive information and suggestions.

In addition, the Women's Bureau is conducting new research and demonstration projects. For example, one project is exploring the effects on productivity of different types of employer child-care programs. Another project will study how child-care help for welfare mothers affects their employment.

- **Recognizing exemplary efforts**. A major part of this item is our creation of the Secretary's Labor Investing for Tomorrow (LIFT) awards to honor outstanding work force quality activities in four categories: Business school partnerships, school-to-work projects, literacy and skill training programs, and worker recruitment and retention.

- **Expanding volunteer activities**. I am very enthused about our launching of a nationwide campaign to promote mentoring -- a program whereby volunteers serve as caring role models in one-to-one relationships with young people who are at risk of failure in the job market. Already this campaign is producing excellent results, and I have challenged America's businesses to involve at least 10 percent of their employees as volunteers in mentoring programs.

JTPA Amendments

Complementing these initiatives are the Job Training Partnership Act amendments proposed last year. These proposed changes would build on the success of JTPA by better targeting its resources on the mandatory assessment, individual service strategies, remediation, literacy instruction, and year-round youth services. The amendments would improve targeting by widening eligibility for people who face severe employment barriers. These barriers include deficiencies in basic skills, welfare dependency, homelessness, and lack of a high school (or equivalent) diploma.

Targeting is enhanced by revising allocation of resources. There would be separate funding formulas for youth and adult programs, and these would direct more resources to areas with greater numbers of disadvantaged people. Finally, the amendments would promote targeting by expanding Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU) and by turning it from a pilot program into a regular part of JTPA's youth effort. YOU focuses on areas with high concentrations of poverty, gives localities incentives to coordinate services, and stimulates long-term employability.

In addition to improving targeting, the JTPA amendments would make sure that services are provided in a more intensive and comprehensive manner and would require specific linkages among the various parts of service delivery. The linkage requirements may be of special interest to you because of the many cooperative arrangements between ES and JTPA and because of the potential for many more such arrangements.

The public Employment Service has been an important part of the total labor market network in the past. Together, we can ensure its rightful place in the 1990s and beyond.

The Revitalization of the Employment Service: Improving the Employer Relations Program

by Martin F. Smith

As we enter the decade of the 1990s, the United States continues to face problems of labor shortages. Many employers are having difficulty in finding people to fill jobs from a shrinking manpower pool. The introduction of computers and computer-controlled machinery in the workplace requires a higher level of education and training to meet the requirements of entry-level jobs in the economy of the 1990s.

At the same time, public policy has focused on the need to provide employment for disadvantaged citizens. Special emphasis has been placed on creating employment opportunities for targeted populations. These populations currently include minorities, welfare recipients, and youth who are potential school dropouts.

Martin F. Smith is supervisor, Current Employment Statistics and Local Area Unemployment Statistics Unit of the Maryland Department of Economic and Employment Development. The paper submitted was the final product of his research project to obtain a PhD in employment and training policy from the University of Maryland-Baltimore Graduate School.

The Employment Service appears to have the best potential of the existing service delivery systems to provide all citizens with the labor market information needed to secure gainful and satisfying employment. In 1933, the Wagner-Peyser Act established "a national system of employment offices for men, women, and juniors who are legally qualified to engage in gainful occupations."[1] From its inception in 1933 until the early 1970s, this concept of universal service was the core philosophy of the Employment Service. Throughout the evolution of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act and Job Training Partnership Act programs, the Employment Service attempted to develop a cooperative relationship with other resource agencies. The importance of the Employment Service in providing leadership in this arena has been recognized by Thomas Plewes, who is currently an Associate Commissioner for the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. In a 1988 address to an Employment Service Information Exchange Forum, he noted that "the bottom line in this discussion of labor shortages is that American employers are getting worried about this issue, and no single agency appears willing to step forward to fix the problem. Shouldn't this be a role of the education, employment, and training system? Isn't this a 'win-win' situation for the Employment Service and the nation's employers?"[2]

Many problems faced by the Employment Service are issues that will require both long-term so-lutions and major financial support. Recent budgetary actions in Congress have indicated that little, if any, financial support can be expected from Washington to fund improvements in Employment Service operations. Creative thinking concerning more effective use of existing resources will be the best option for implementing any improvements in the short term. This paper examines some of the problems facing the Employment Service, and uses the employer relations program as a vehicle for incremental policy changes leading to short term solutions.

Problems Facing the Employment Service

Major staffing and budget reductions, which began in the mid-1970s, have threatened the effectiveness of the Employment Service. Congressional testimony given by the General Accounting Office on October 31, 1989, indicated that federal funding of the state Employment Service, after adjusting for inflation, declined by almost 7 percent between 1984-87. Many offices have started group interviewing techniques as opposed to personal interviews due to staff shortages. Only 40 percent of the smaller offices nationwide have professional job counselors available to assist applicants.[3] Data from a survey by the Interstate Conference of Employment Security Agencies indicated that between 1981-87 the total number of Employment Service staff members assigned to job counseling duties declined by 34 percent. Of the staff members assigned as counselors, only 78 percent are performing counseling duties on a full-time basis as opposed to a 97 percent level at the beginning of the survey.[4] The ICESA study found that the net result of these reductions has been a decline in both the quantity and quality of service provided to the public.

Another major problem that has hampered the Employment Service is a lack of skilled staff to operate an increasingly complex system of computerized matching of job openings and job applicants. A survey performed by the Department of Labor in 1970 indicated that only 50 percent of the interviewers in local Employment Service offices had a four-year college degree, and the average level of education for all interviewers was two years of college.[5] A 1985 study of the Maryland Employment Service observed that, "there is an evident lack of adequate opportunity for professional training to facilitate not only career movement, but also the adequate performance of routine responsibilities."[6] The Maryland report also recommended that the agency establish a minimum, entry-level educational requirement of an Associate in Arts degree.[7] (The agency has not implemented this recommendation as of May, 1990.) Another example of the minimal employee skills is illustrated by the fact that while 92 percent of the 1,700 Employment Service offices nationwide are able to enter applicant and job opening information into a computer database, only 75 percent of these offices are able to extract the data needed to match applicants and jobs using this database.[8]

A legacy of the creation of the Employment Service through the 1933 Wagner-Peyser Act has been the image of a welfare employment agency. Prior to the establishment of the Unemployment Insurance system by the states under the authority of the Social Security Act of 1935, the primary function of the Employment Service was to select applicants for public works projects established during the New Deal. Many of the individuals applying for public works jobs had limited education and skills. The federal requirement that Unemployment Insurance benefits be paid from local Employment Service offices has reinforced the image for both employers and job applicants that the Employment Service office is "the unemployment office." [9] Efforts to separate the Unemployment Insurance and Employment Service functions have been unsuccessful due to common budget authority. Funding for the salaries and administrative overhead costs for the Employment Service is obtained from the Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA). FUTA is a payroll tax paid by the employer (currently 0.8% of the first $7,000 of each employee's wages). Since funds raised by FUTA are appropriated by Congress to operate both the Unemployment Insurance and Employment Service systems, the administrative structure of a joint state unemployment-employment agency probably will remain the standard of operation for the foreseeable future. [10]

Privatization - more of a problem than a solution

In response to some of the problems currently facing the Employment Service, one suggested approach would be to turn over many of the functions now performed by the Employment Service to private, for-profit employment agencies. This option would be in keeping with the trend of privatization of government services which began in 1980 under the Reagan administration.[11] The owner of Snelling and Snellling, a leading advocate of privatization, has recommended that private agencies be permitted to place Unemployment Insurance claimants in jobs, with states paying for the cost of this service from their unemployment tax funds. In addition, he also suggested that all Employment Service applicants be sent to private agencies to apply for positions for which the employer will pay the private agency fee. His final proposal is that the state Employment Service be prohibited from operating in competition with private-sector agencies.[12]

Critics such as Snelling contend that their industry can provide services to the public at a lower cost than the Employment Service. However, continuing research on the subject of private employment agencies has yet to produce a reasonable amount of statistical evidence to support the efficiency arguments espoused by the private-sector organizations.[13]

Nevertheless, in March, 1986, the General Accounting Office recommended that state employment offices refer applicants to private employment agencies, provided that the applicant would not be charged a fee for this service.[14] Representatives of the Employment Service have rejected this approach for a number of reasons. Ray Marshall, a former U.S. Secretary of Labor, observed that, "many labor market functions simply will not be carried out by private institutions in a manner consistent with the public interest."[15]

Marshall suggests that perhaps the most serious reason for rejecting the private employment agency argument has its basis in historical perspective. Beginning with Ohio in 1890, a number of states established public employment offices primarily in response to "the illicit, inimical, and immoral methods used by private agencies."$_{16}$ Investigations by the Ohio Secretary of State revealed that many private agencies were engaged in corrupt practices. In 1892, the state labor commissioners of 20 states at a national conference went on record against private agencies.[16] The most serious charge substantiated by state investigators was the use of private employment firms by houses of ill repute to recruit young women for prostitution.[17]

The Employment Service has maintained a policy of providing services to applicants on a non-discriminatory basis.[18] In addition to prohibiting racial discrimination, the Employment Service does not participate in "skimming" of applicants. Skimming is a process by which only applicants who appear to have the best chance for employment are sent to interview for positions with private employers. There is the danger that private agencies would tend to select the best qualified applicants from state employment offices, leaving the Employment Service with less qualified applicants. A recent example of racial discrimination and skimming occurred in September, 1989, when New York State Attorney General Robert Abrams filed a suit charging four major New York City private employment agencies with discriminating against job applicants who were members of minority groups.[19] Therefore, privatization does not appear to be an acceptable solution to the problems facing the Employment Service.

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Employment Service operations - a brief description

The mission of the Employment Service is to find jobs for people and people for jobs. Within this definition, the local offices provide labor-exchange services for both the employer and the jobseeker. While many applicants for jobs are either unemployed or receiving Unemployment Insurance benefits, the Employment Service is available for use by all persons who have legal status to hold jobs in the United States. Federal law mandates that priority services be given to veterans. Other groups that are targeted for special services include welfare recipients, economically disadvantaged youth, migrant and seasonal farm workers, and persons with disabilities. To facilitate the job search for special populations, the Employment Service provides supplemental assistance. Some of these supplemental programs, such as Federal Bonding, Targeted Job Tax Credit, and Alien Labor Certification, are operated directly by the Employment Service. Comprehensive services, such as job training, are provided through referral to other programs. The primary source of assistance for special populations is the Job Training Partnership Act Service Delivery Area. Coordination between JTPA and Employment Service is mandated by federal legislation.

In providing basic services to job-ready applicants, the Employment Service performs an initial interview to determine the candidate's education, job skills, and work history. Additional assistance can be provided if a need is indicated, depending on local office resources. Most offices can provide aptitude testing, using the General Aptitude Test Battery. Job counseling also is available, but as noted previously, budget reductions have lessened accessibility to this service.

Most applicants looking for work are confined to a review of job vacancy listings as the only service they will receive from the Employment Service. These usually are posted for review in reception areas. Depending on the volume of job listings, they are presented in summary form on paper, microfiche, or computer display. The information provided to applicants gives data such as wage rates, job descriptions, and minimum qualifications, but does not give the employer's name, address, or telephone number. Employer contact information is held by the local office interviewers. When a candidate locates a possible vacancy from the list, he/she must take the job vacancy (coded by a computerized number) to an interviewer. The interviewer then reviews the applicant's qualifications and the employer's requirements. If both match, the applicant is provided with instructions on how to contact the employer. If no match is made, the applicant is advised to either further review the listings or return on a future date when more vacancies may be available.

Employer Relations - problems with implementation

The Employment Service attempts to market an employer relations program to encourage businesses to list job vacancies. While employers are free to contact local Employment Service offices directly, most job vacancies are solicited by placement interviewers or employer relations representatives. Interviewers usually are limited to soliciting vacancies for a specific applicant who cannot find suitable job vacancies in the local office listings. This process is known as job development.

Employer relations representatives are full-time staff members who are responsible for developing and maintaining contact with employers for the purpose of transmitting and receiving Labor Market Information. Job listings obtained from employers are submitted to the local office, and then are cross matched with applicants on file to locate a suitable match. If the local office is unable to match any applicants, the listing may be sent, with approval of the employer, to additional Employment Service offices for file search.

The Employment Service also maintains a skeleton Interstate Job Bank where job listings can be distributed nationwide. The New York state agency, under contract with the federal Department of Labor operate these limited services from offices in Albany. Due to inadequate computer equipment, including a modern network to communicate data directly with local offices, it takes 7-10 days for a job listing to be distributed nationwide.

Implementation of the employer relations program has produced mixed results. Despite efforts to increase the number and types of job vacancies listed with the local Employment Service offices, the majority of vacancies available in most local offices continues to consist of entry-level positions with relatively low starting wages. Reductions in federal funding for the Employment Survice have hindered the development of training programs for staff engaged in employer relations functions. The passing of the Job Training Partnership Act in 1982 has created a potential duplication of employer outreach programs conducted by JTPA administrative entities and state Employment Service agencies.

Three possible areas for improving the employer relations program would involve better utilization of programs now in operation. These programs are Federal Contractor Job Listing (FCJL), the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI), and the Job Service Employer Committee (JSEC). Because changes in these three programs could be implemented in the short term through incremental policy changes, they appear to form a foundation on which a revitalized employer relations program can be constructed. Therefore, let us examine more closely the FCJL, NVTI, and JSEC programs.

Federal Contractor Job Listing

Under the present Employment Service system, employers are not required to list job vacancies with the state Employment Service agencies even though the FUTA payroll tax system implies that a direct service linkage exists between all employers and the state agencies. Except for a brief period during World War II, the solicitation of job vacancies by the Employment Service depended on the voluntary cooperation of employers. Statistics to measure the use of the Employment Service have not been available since the early 1970s. Plewes notes that, "back then, we were able to provide a comprehensive quarterly analysis of shortages, because we had a strong job-bank exchange program between the states and a monthly job openings/labor turnover survey. Both of those data systems have gone the way of the budget cutting axe."[20]

In the period from 1970-71, the return of almost 1 million veterans from the Vietnam War created a major crisis in the labor market. Unemployment for recently discharged veterans reached 10.8 percent, with higher rates among those veterans who were service-connected disabled, or members of a minority or economically disadvantaged population. Veterans reporting to Employment Service offices found that the number of job listings had declined by more than 3 million from 1966-71.[21]

In response to this crisis, President Richard M. Nixon issued Executive Order 11598 on June 16, 1971. This action established a policy that all federal contractors and subcontractors were required to list their job vacancies with the state Employment Service. The mandatory listing provisions of this executive order were incorporated into the Vietnam-era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1972. This Act requires federal contractors to establish special emphasis in their hiring practices for the employment of Vietnam-era veterans and veterans with service-connected disabilities. In addition, local Employment Service offices are required to give priority in the job referral process to qualified veterans for any federal contractor listings. In 1973, Executive Order 11701 established the authority of the Secretary of Labor to implement the provisions of this Act concerning federal employment.[22] This legislation remains in effect at present, with minor regulatory changes, and is referred to in official publications of the U.S. Department of Labor and state employment agencies as Federal Contractor Job Listing. Earlier publications of the Department of Labor use the term Mandatory Listing, or ML, to discuss the operations of this program.

While the primary purpose of the FCJL program was to assist veterans in obtaining jobs, Secretary of Labor James Hodgson acknowledged that the program also was envisioned as a major policy tool to increase the number of job placements made by the state employment agencies during Fiscal Year 1973.[23] A 1976 study of the FCJL program in nine major cities by John F. Baum and Joseph C. Ullman of Purdue University indicated that the FCJL program in its first three years generated an increased number of job listings from small and medium-size firms with local Employment Service offices.[24]

Veterans employment staff and FCJL

The enactment of Public Law 100-323 on May 20, 1988, has generated a renewed interest in the role of the veterans employment staff assigned to Employment Service offices. Public Law 100-323 made a number of substantial changes in the requirements of Title 38, United States Code. Under the authority of this legislation, the primary responsibility for the monitoring and listing of FCJL job vacancies with local Employment Service offices is assigned to the Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER).

The LVER is a full-time state employee at the local office level who devotes their entire workload to providing veterans with employment and training services. In addition to establishing specific job duties for the LVER and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program staff assigned to local Employment Service offices, this legislation also creates a permanent National Veterans Training Institute (NVIT).

NVTI began as a pilot project in the fall, 1986, under a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to the University of Colorado at Denver. The purpose of NVTI is to provide a unified training program for the Employment Service and U.S. Department of Labor staff who provide employment services to veterans. During its first year of existence the program provided a basic course of instruction for 2,600 participants throughout the United States.[25] The University of Colorado at Denver recently was awarded a three-year contract beginning in 1990 to continue to operate NVTI.

Job Service Employer Committees

In 1971, the U.S. Department of Labor's Manpower Administration initiated a research and development project to improve the employer relations program. The result of this pilot study was the establishment of an Employer Services Improvement Program (ESIP) during Fiscal year 1974. "The basic local ESIP model sets up a local employer committee to review ES operations for the purpose of providing more effective service to employers and spurring employers to make greater use of this service."[26] This program continues to be used at the present time and now is identified as the Job Service Employer Committee (JSEC).

A 1974 evaluation of the ESIP pilot program by Greenleigh Associates identifies the problems that clearly are evident in today's JSEC system. "In general, the study has found that a local ESIP project can be readily initiated and stir notable initial enthusiasm and response from ES staff at both state and local levels and from participating employers. It appears much more difficult, however, to carry it forward as an active and effective problem-finding, problem-solving process that engages local ES management, staff, and employers in continuing interaction. It is easier to establish staff task forces and ad hoc employer committees to formulate a blueprint for desirable program change than it is to use them to bring about and evaluate change."[27]

The JSEC does not have the legal standing or programmatic authority vested in its membership granted to Private Industry Councils (PIC). Under JTPA, PICs are executive boards appointed by local government officials to supervise the activities of Service Delivery Areas. The PIC is responsible for the development of a plan of action to provide employment and training services for the Service Delivery Areas designated within states, which includes the activities of the Employment Service. At the state level, these plans are developed by a State Job Training Coordinating Committee (SJTCC), which also is mandated under JTPA. As a result of the PIC-SJTCC structure, the JSEC has lost its ability to influence the activities of the Employment Service. In effect, the activities of most JSECs are duplicated by the local PIC and the SJTCC.

Recommendations for improving the employer relations program

1. Expand the use of the Federal Contractor Job Listing legislation to generate additional job vacancy listings for state employment offices.

FCJL has been demonstrated to be an effective tool to increase the number of job vacancies listed with the Employment Service. More time should be invested in the FJCL program by LVERs. The U.S. Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service should increase the emphasis on FCJL listings, especially in view of recent proposed cutbacks in active duty military personnel, which have the potential to create a situation similar to the labor market conditions of the 1970-71 period for veterans.

2. The National Veterans Training Institute should concentrate on outreach training in employer relations for veterans employment staff.

A key aspect in generating improved employer relations is the development of a trained employer relations staff. At the present time, NVTI is the only federally funded training system available to meet the needs of state employment staff. In addition to meeting the needs of veterans to find suitable employment opportunities, the Employment Service should benefit from increased employer contact and the opportunity to increase both the quantity and quality of job vacancy listings.

3. The Job Service Employer Committees should be integrated with the Private Industry Councils.

At a time when resources are in short supply for the employment and training system it does not benefit the state Employment Service to continue to support a separate JSEC system. The JSEC should function as a subcommittee of the local PIC, with the JSEC chair being seated as both a voting member and permanent vice-chair of the PIC. This will ensure that the Employment Service will have a stronger voice within the JTPA system, and it is hoped it will lead to a more cooperative development of employer support from the private sector. It makes little sense to maintain a duplicate advisory committee at the local service delivery level given the existing authority granted to PICs under JTPA. It would appear that the U.S. Department of Labor could suggest that this change be made from a regulatory standpoint without introducing new legislation. However, consideration should be given to amending JTPA to require the Service Delivery Areas to integrate the JSECs into the PICs to more strongly encourage voluntary cooperation.

Conclusions

Major problems facing the Employment Service will require long-term solutions. While long-term planning is taking place at both the federal and state levels in response to these problems, the federal budget deficit will prohibit the implementation of new programs that will require substantial investments. In addition, state initiatives will be limited since they will be required to provide additional funding to maintain the present level of Employment Service operations.

Plewes suggested to the 1988 Employment Service Information Exchange Forum that its challenge was "to focus on the future, but not to the exclusion of fixing today's problems."[28] In the short term, we need to develop creative alternatives to immediate problems that can be addressed through incremental policy changes and better utilization of existing resources.

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22

Coordination Brings LMI and Job Service Together

by Ellen O'Brien Saunders and Betsey M. Fettman

How can we provide relevant labor market information to jobseekers who visit our local offices? That was the question posed to the Employment Service and Labor Market Information divisions of the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services. Representatives of both divisions reviewed needs, resources and implementation strategies that would lead to making labor market information more readily available and easier to understand for jobseekers.

The old adage of "give a man a fish, feed him for a day; teach him to fish and feed him for life" has a parallel in the Employment Service. The traditional Employment Service function of referring applicants to job orders provides one-shot job-search assistance. However, by educating jobseekers on using labor market information to conduct a self-directed job search, Employment Service staff can have a greater long-term effect on jobseekers. In effect, we can arm our customers for a lifetime of educated career decision making.

The Ohio Bureau of Employment Services has been exploring options in Employment Service automation. Following a two-day symposium on the future of Ohio's Employment Service, a program mission

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and principles of that mission were adopted. The Employment Service mission is to promote full employment in Ohio by offering direct, easy access to the best possible information about labor market activity, especially about available workers and job opportunities, to a broad range of customers. This mission statement breaths new life into the Employment Service by striving beyond the tick-mark customer self-service. Jobseekers will have maximum access to job opportunities, not just to job orders. The Labor Market Information/Employment Service project dovetails with this mission statement to provide tangible evidence that jobseekers can take an active role in securing sucessful careers.

Incorporating Labor Market Information

Staff from the Labor Market Information and Employment Service divisions investigated the many means of incorporating labor market information into the local Employment Services offices. Research culminated in the identification of two major projects that could place easy-to-use labor market information in the hands of every Employment Service customer. The projects were labeled short- and long-term, based on the time and investment necessary to implement.

The major long-term goal identified by the committee was to provide the 76 local Employment Service offices access to the LMI system, an automated delivery system for Ohio labor force, occupational and industry data. Implementation of the long-term goal was not thought to be viable for at least three years because it required each local office to have computer terminals. However, since funding became available through the welfare-support Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) program, both the long- and short-term ES/LMI goals likely are to be implemented simultaneously in many parts of the state.

The LMI system represents the most advanced means of disseminating vital Ohio labor market information in an easy-to-use and understandable format. This menu-driven computer system includes: the statewide industry distribution of employment for each occupation; timely updates of labor force and industry data; industry and occupational projections through the year 2000; and allows for two distinct search strategies for viewing data.

The LMI system is available through a VAX mainframe computer. About 100 staff members from 41 offices were provided with a two-day training session that focused on using the LMI system for job-development research. System access, training and equipment will be provided to the rest of Ohio's Employment Service Offices as they are added gradually to the JOBS program.

Training emphasis included system and report access. Appropriate application of the various LMI reports was discussed in the context of several case studies. On returning to their offices, the staff received hard-wired computer terminals and printers to access the system. The JOBS program is a particularly appropriate vehicle for positioning the LMI system in the local offices because the ES portion of the program maintains an emphasis on job placement and several LMI system reports aid that endeavor.

Job Service staff uses

The LMI system allows Job Service staff to identify local occupational supply and demand data. Use of such information should enhance the career decision-making and job-search processes in several ways. Clients who are preparing to enter or reenter the labor market through training will be able to identify quickly and easily the occupations with desirable supply/demand ratios and to select training programs that most likely will lead to labor market success. Clients who already possess suitable occupational skills will be able to use the "Industry Distribution of Occupational Employment" report to identify the range of industries that employ individuals who have similar skills and, ultimately, local employers within those industries.

The Ohio Career Information System (OCIS) is a component of the LMI system through an agreement between the LMI division and the Ohio Department of Education, orchestrated through the Ohio Occupational Information Coordinating Committee. OCIS provides a wide array of career and job-search information. While LMI system reports are statistical in nature and best interpreted by trained staff, OCIS reports can be understood easily by clients.

By using the OCIS component of the LMI system, Job Service staff quickly can provide narrative occupational descriptions to clients. Perhaps the most useful aspect of OCIS is that it gives the staff the ability to conduct an occupational search based on a combination of labor market demand and the client's interests, aptitudes, skills, educational level, desired wages and physical abilities/limitations. All of this is possible because OCIS is on-line and menu driven.

In additional to the occupational description, the OCIS occupational printout includes a list of related occupations, sources of additional information and potential career paths. OCIS contains several other files that identify local training facilities by training program, including vocational schools, two- and four-year colleges and technical schools, and proprietary schools. OCIS also provides job-search help files such as putting together a resume, cover letter, thank you letter and preparing for an interview. Additionally, OCIS has files containing both local and national financial aid information.

In not much time, a client could walk out of an Employment Service office having identified an occupational goal, a training facility and financial aid for which to apply, a start on a resume, or an idea of which local employers to target in the job search. This accomplishment is a major step on the ladder toward achieving the Employment Service program mission -- providing jobseekers with direct, easy access to the best possible labor market information. None of this would be possible without the coordination of the Job Service and Labor Market Information divisions. because of arrangements like this, Ohio Job Service applicants will be afforded the best service possible and will have the greatest chance for economic success.

Equipping jobseekers

The short-term proposal, so called because it could be fully implemented within 12 months, equips jobseekers with hardcopy labor market information presented in a "Job Corner."

The key component of the Job Corner is a rack of pamphlets, created by the LMI division, that cover some 50 occupations. Each pamphlet describes an occupation, lists its projected rate of growth through the year 2000, and gives the statewide average wage for that occupation. The pamphlet displays the industries that employ significant numbers of workers in that occupation, as well as the **Yellow Page Directory** index titles under which one could find employers in these industries. (The occupational titles and definitions come from the Occupational Employment Statistics program, and the **Yellow Page** titles come from a report produced under the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee.) The remainder of the pamphlet contains tips on effective job hunting, references to available Job Service assistance, and a sample job application form that the jobseeker can fill out and take along to interviews so that the actual application form can be completed quickly and accurately.

In addition to the pamphlets, there is a wall chart displaying the projected employment growth for each industry. These projections are listed for Service Delivery Areas so the jobseeker can tell which industries in the area are high growth or to which area of the state the applicant should direct the job-search activities to maximize chances for success. On a table in the Job Corner is a copy of the **Ohio Occupational Almanac.** This publication of the LMI division contains supply/demand, wage, and selected job characteristics information for more than 250 occupations. Jobseekers also will be able to find microfiche job listings, Job Service Resume Service applications, a copy of the Bureau of Labor Statistics **Occupational Outlook Handbook** and the **Harris Ohio Industrial Directory** (for identifying employers by industry). Additionally, the classified sections of local newspapers, donated as a community service by the newspapers, will be placed in the Job Corner.

This Job Corner approach requires only hardcopy publications that are currently in circulation, plus the 50 pamphlets. The Job Corner is a cost-effective method to deliver placement assistance to everyone who comes to an Employment Service office for help in finding a job, and it provides a fine example of the Job Service and Labor Market Information divisions working together to serve jobseekers.

Implementation of the project will take place gradually so the committee can monitor how the design is received by local office staff and jobseekers. Using eight offices as pilots for about three months, the committee will keep track of how many pamphlets are used (and which occupations seem to be the most popular), and how much staff support actually is required to maintain the Corner. Staff support for the Corner includes both physically sustaining the resources as well as answering questions from jobseekers. The eight pilot offices were selected as a sample for all offices based on several criteria. Included in the sample are offices (from each area of the state) that represent both rural and metropolitan areas, large and small offices, offices that have labor market analysts and those that do not (to determine whether having an "expert" on staff affects the success of the Corner), and offices that have out-stationed veterans' representatives (to measure the effectiveness of using the pamphlets outside of the Job Corner environment).

Following the pilot project, the committee will evaluate the program's success, make adjustments for unforeseen issues, and implement the Job Corner in all 76 local Employment Service offices. Full scale operation is anticipated for early 1991. For more information on the Job Corner, contact Committee Chair Carol Brigham at 614/466-0703.

Jobs New Jersey: a Model Concept in Cooperation

by J. Robert White

Models, paradigms, prototypes, new initiatives -- words used increasingly in our everyday language as we struggle to absorb the information about the mismatch between workers' skills and demands of the workplace, the lack of educational foundations that will allow individuals to compete in a technological society, the restructuring of "big business," a softening of the economy after a long upward climb, ad infinitum. In the global perspective, changing economies, the expanding European Common Market, falling and rising governments, crumbling walls, third-world technology, and a myriad of other changes add to the confusion in the way we view the world.

Today, an organization whose stated purpose is to be effective in the labor market cannot rest on its laurels. When the comparative quality of American technology is questionable, it becomes easier to "farm out" jobs, not only out of the office and factory, but also beyond the U.S. borders where labor may be cheaper, but a terminal or microcomputer connects workers in real time to the home office.

One of the oft-touted problems with American manufacturers is that while they may talk long-range planning, the real concern is this quarter's bottom line. Government agencies are no different. The stated reason is that we don't know from one fiscal year to the next what the legislature will allot us in the way of funding, so we spend what we have now, talk about long-range planning, and live for today.

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Even when training programs are involved in the system, too often they are developed by the educational vendors who have particular programs to sell. Separate government agencies provide similar services, refer clients back and forth between each other, and the myth goes on.. We become immobilized trying to tread water in the whirlpool of confusion and search for direction.

Change occurs. Change happens. Change is. If we learn anything from life it it that things do not stay the same, no matter how much wishful thinking we invoke. The challenge is to discern the course most likely to accomplish your purpose.

Clear direction necessary

Enabling positive, directed change to occur can happen only when there is a clear direction with an understood mission and related goals. The defensive cry that people don't like change and resist is related directly to the degree the mission and goals are understood and provided, and as is usually the case, with employment related programs, the mission is philosophically acceptable to the individuals mandated to carry out that mission.

In the shadow of these and other concerns, the former governor of New Jersey, Thomas Kean, mandated that there be fewer separate agencies working to help people become employed or employable, and that they cooperate in a way in which the jobseeker would be more efficiently and effectively served. To develop a model (paradigm, prototype, new initiative) was a long struggle. The conception may have been pure, but personalities and politics always play a part in the long pregnancies before models are born; and once born the infant changes rapidly, with much protest and demanding, before the mature shape becomes apparent.

On March 23, 1989, the Jobs New Jersey concept was born, formalized months after conception as a way in which the New Jersey Employment Service and the Job Training Partnership Act offices would work together to offer "seamless service" to clients looking for employment, whether job ready or needing training. The state mission was two-fold:

- To offer more complete and efficient service to the public, and
- To effect closer integration in order to accomplish legislative direction.

The stated reason behind the initiative was "Making good services even better."

Employee understanding

Before Jobs New Jersey (JNJ) could become a reality every employee in the two agencies needed to understand that this was built on the premise that each agency would maintain its own area of expertise and operate within the regulations governing it. Everyone was aware of the differences in career ladders, pay equity and job security, and addressing these concerns was made a priority. Meetings were held on a regular basis throughout the state to allow the employees of both the ES and JTPA offices to share in a structured forum what each does, the mandates under which they function, and the goals they strive to accomplish. Directors of the divisions of Employment and Training and the Employment Service were on hand to answer questions about the JNJ concept. Informal activities were included to encourage people to mix and get to know one another on a more personal basis.

It would be unfair to say this was an unmitigated success. The state mission was not sufficient for most of the employees who wanted to know what they really were supposed to be doing. The unspoken threat of being merged with another agency hung like a dark cloud with no silver lining in sight. Local offices were required to write joint operational plans for the year. Not that this was new, but the new twist was that the plans were read and scanned for new cooperative initiatives and the likelihood that both agencies had developed them together. No longer was lip service to cooperation acceptable. Now the cooperation had to be visible and potentially effective. The two directors went "on the road" to entertain questions and to try to more fully explain Jobs New Jersey. A Jobs New Jersey logo was developed, and the use of it had to be included in local JNJ plans.

Enter vocational rehabilitation

In October, 1989, a new player entered the arena: The New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS). It could be stated fairly that the three major players in the New Jersey Department of Labor whose main concern was to enable people to become or continue to be effective workers in the New Jersey economy had joined forces under the JNJ umbrella. The question was how the JNJ concept would expand to accommodate the new players. The road shows continued. All three agencies participated fully. There were special sessions for counselors and encouragement of case conferences where an applicant was receiving services from more than one of the agencies.

What does a model of Jobs New Jersey look like? Since JNJ is a concept of cooperation, in theory, it accomplishes the following:

Benefits for the Applicant:

- A unified first interview where the applicant is informed of the full range of programs, benefits and services entitled.
- A single counseling, assessment and employability development process.
- Assistance and support in the enrollment process.
- Access to an integrated placement system incorporating access to all known job openings in the labor market.

Benefits for the Employer:

- A single point of contact for full information about all services and programs.
- A single point of contact for assistance in filling openings, obtaining information about on-the-job training, customized training, Targeted Jobs Tax Credit, and summer assistance.

- Rapid response to plant closings with services brought to the employer's locations.

Benefits for the private industry council:

- The opportunity to assume a more energetic advocacy role for programs, services and agencies within the labor market area.
- The opportunity to view all programs and activities within the labor market to work toward a labor marketwide planning program.

Ultimate benefits:

- The clients will be more successful because of the fuller range of opportunities presented.
- Cost savings will result from the absence of duplicative effort and reduction of failure to help a client to get to, or back to, work.
- Fewer clients will become discouraged or lost in the system.
- Employers and the public will gain more confidence in government services.
- Taxpayer relief will result from the diminished burden of supporting non-production programs.
- Employers will gain access to more fully trained, better-prepared job applicants.

In reality JNJ takes many faces. Only more time will tell whether those ideas envisioned in theory will become actualities. However, one JNJ area stands out in its efforts to embrace the concept and move forward.

The Cumberland/Salem Service Delivery Area lies in the southern part of New Jersey, below the Mason-Dixon line. Farms and Wheaton Glass are the main industries, but in recent years more industry has moved there. The casino industry in Atlantic County offers employment for some residents of this SDA, but this is not the fast-paced, urban New Jersey many think of when New Jersey is mentioned. Because of that, perhaps here is more time to focus before taking action and seeking the direction in which to move. The request for a coordinator for the Cumberland/Salem JNJ, someone with an extensive employment and training background who was not overly concerned about protecting "turf," came as no surprise. The individual chosen for the position, a long-time Employment Service employee with a wide range of experience, could not have been better. Hank Fien, a resident of the area with state-wide experience, not only knew the programs he was to coordinate but also had a keen sense of marketing and the publicity needed to promote any program.

JNJ's "seamless service" goal

Cumberland/Salem JTPA director, Charles Thomas, and Vineland Employment Service manager, William Thomas (no relation), already had agreed on many basics, but needed a full-time person to coordinate the start-up of the program. Fien understood the common goals, and soon articles were appearing in the local newspaper touting the various programs in the JNJ area.

The Jobs New Jersey logo was used on similar posters recruiting clients for training or jobs and employers for workers or other employer benefits. The telephone numbers do not indicate that one would talk with someone from the Employment Service or JTPA, and the telephones are answered with "Jobs New Jersey." The goal to provide "seamless service" is being accomplished. Three 30-second, public-service radio advertisements were produced with and aired by the largest FM station in southern New Jersey, again targeting both clients and employers, using a central telephone number.

Some of the specifics that define this as a model effort are:

- Full access by both JTPA and DVRS to the ES applicant and employer data base in the On-line Data Display System/Enhanced National Data System, with training in its use.
- Use of JTPA's personal computer system to print mini-resumes of marketable clients to be mailed to targeted employers in the JNJ area.
- Combining On-line Data-Entry and Display System (ODDS) information with JTPA's computerized skill transferability program to identify transfer skills of dislocated workers.
- Acceptance of both agencies of the ES 511 (application form) as a common intake form while working on a simpler form that would fit both their needs.
- Coordination of testing: The Test of Adult Basic Education to be administered for client assessment by the JTPA staff; and Validity Generalization testing to be done by ES staff when required as one condition of employment.
- Transfer of the Career Information Delivery System (CIDS) from the local ES office to the local high school teen center, with staff on site being trained to use the system.
- Inclusion of a "world of work" and Labor Market Information workshop conducted by ES staff in JTPA's four week, life-skills training.
- A coordinated marketing program to employers by ES staff and JTPA job developers.
- Coordinated scheduling of tours of major companies for participants in the "10,000 Jobs For 10,000 Graduates" program.
- Regional staff meetings held for ES, JTPA and DVRS staff to talk about their activities, coordination needs, and any other topics related to employment, training and vocational rehabilitation.

What happens to a local office as a result of these coordination efforts? If the Cumberland/Salem JNJ area is an indication, the staff becomes enthused. The manager of the Vineland ES office has asked for permission to go paperless to cut down on work not related to helping people get to work. The main thrust does not change in that staff still have the same goals but new ways of achieving them. "Ours" and "theirs" become less important. Communication data systems of both agencies, and the willingness to share them, greatly improves the ability to provide services. In an age of technology, the failure to use or develop a common database may indicate a lack of dedication to the stated goal of coordination.

The Cumberland/Salem model would not have developed had it not been for a clear vision by the primary players at the local level as to their mission and the goals to achieve it. It would not have developed had they been timid players, uncomfortable with their own ideas, and looking for leadership elsewhere. Nor would it have developed had there been failure to communicate clearly these intangibles to their respective staffs.

JNJ works in other areas of New Jersey, but it works differently in each SDA. In some areas ES, JTPA, DVRS, and Unemployment Insurance all are located in the same building with the potential to offer services in a "one-stop-shopping" mode. This works if the local players understand the JNJ mission and goals, and are willing to work toward them. Collocation does not ensure the "seamless service" concept, but it may result in better services than when offices are not collocated.

Is the Cumberland/Salem Jobs New Jersey area a model? Perhaps. Will it attain the theoretical benefits hoped for? Probably. Is it an effective, efficient employment and training delivery system? Certainly.

Building On Experience: the Ohio Bureau Of Employment Service's Role In JOBS

by Ellen O'Brien Saunders and Barbara A. Kaufman

The implementation of the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program in Ohio has provided the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services (OBES) with new opportunities -- and new challenges -- in serving welfare recipients. OBES houses the Employment Service, Unemployment Compensation, Job Training Partnership Act and Labor Market Information programs. While OBES has a long history of working with those who receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) grants through the Work Incentive Program, JOBS has challenged the agency to redefine and extend its services. This article describes the agency's participation in the larger, state JOBS effort.

The federal Family Support Act of 1988 created the JOBS program, "to encourage and assist needy children and parents. . . obtain the education, training and employment needed to avoid long-term welfare dependence." What is new about the JOBS program is the "transformation" of AFDC, an income-support program, to income support **combined with** employment and training investments. This reform of the welfare system has been one of the few social-policy initiatives in recent times on which both liberals and conservatives could agree.

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Linkage Requirements and Ohio's Methods

Both JOBS and JTPA and their regulations, require cooperation and collaboration:

"The Governor of each State shall assure that program activities under this part (JOBS) are coordinated in that State with programs operated under the Job Training Partnership Act and with any other relevant employment, training and education programs available in that State."

(Family Support Act)

Ohio began JOBS on July 1, 1989, in the 41 counties that were part of the Fair Work program, Ohio's welfare-to-work program. Since 1983, it required all employable AFDC and general assistance recipients to look for jobs, participate in job training, or perform useful community work in exchange for their welfare checks. The balance of Ohio's 88 counties are expected to implement JOBS by spring, 1991.

The Ohio Department of Human Services (ODHS) is responsible for the implementation of the JOBS program. In order to begin JOBS at the earliest allowable date under the legislation -- July 1, 1989 -- ODHS submitted and received federal approval for its state plan to operate JOBS prior to the issuance of federal regulations. As required by the Family Support Act, the plan was submitted to the Ohio Job Training Coordinating Council (OJTCC) for review and comment. Since that review the OJTCC's Welfare Committee has worked with the ODHS on the development of the rules and procedures that spell out the "how" and "what" of contracting for employment and training services by county departments of human services under JOBS. As implementation of JOBS continues, the Welfare Committee continues to monitor its progress and promote cooperation and coordination between human services and the JTPA system.

But legislation and regulations alone are not the only means of bringing cooperation and the efficient use of existing resources to the implementation of JOBS in Ohio. In July, 1989, Gov. Richard F. Celeste established the Governor's Interagency Task Force on Welfare Reform to coordinate participation of state agencies in the implementation of the Family Support Act. The original direction to the Task Force was to answer the question: "How can state agencies cooperate and coordinate their efforts so that Ohio can have the most successful JOBS program?"

The Task Force is composed of representatives from the Office of the Governor and the state agencies providing service to JOBS participants directly or indirectly through local service deliverers, as well as the office chair. The state agencies involved include the Departments of Human Services; Education; Development; and Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services; as well as the Bureau of Employment Services and the Board of Regents.

The Task Force has been successful in identifying service delivery agencies that serve JOBS participants and bringing them together to discuss how their programs are administered and how coordination between agencies, given current delivery systems, can be enhanced. Early in the Task Force deliberations, certain items became dominant on the agenda -- capturing an additional $20 million available in federal JOBS funds, solving the availability-of-child-care dilemma and establishing substantive interagency relationships.

Assisting the Task Force in the development of services was a survey of CDHSs conducted by ODHS. The counties indicated that alcohol and drug treatment and basic education were services that, given existing community resources, would be in short supply as more and more welfare recipients entered the JOBS program. For some agencies, the only reason for active participation in the Task Force was the possibility of increased funding. Since agreement on planning and other joint coordination requirements could not be reached, it was decided that each individual agency serving on the Task Force would negotiate a separate agreement with ODHS in order to "draw down" federal funds.

OBES involvement in the implementation of JOBS was motivated by the desire to help develop a quality program using the agency's years of experience in employment and training programs such as CETA, WIN and JTPA. The agreement that OBES developed with Human Services was in addition to existing contractual relationships that had been reached as JOBS was implemented and WIN phased out.

Working Together - Examples of Collaboration

During the state's budget process for the 1990-91 biennium, state and federal funds had been appropriated to OBES to fund former WIN staff so they could continue to perform services for welfare clients who were to be referred by county departments of human services. This allowed CDHS agencies to capitalize on the skills and experience of these workers in providing employment and training services to welfare clients, and prevented the layoff of these staff as WIN phased out.

Most of the former WIN staff are working in the delivery of services under non-financial contracts with nine metropolitan counties -- Hamilton (Cincinnati), Montgomery (Dayton), Lucus (Toledo), Lorain (Lorain), Cuyahoga (Cleveland), Mohoning (Youngstown), Startk (Canton), Summit (Akron), and Franklin (Columbus). Contract services have been performed through the newly named Public Assistance Service Offices (PASO). Among the services provided by OBES are testing and assessment, job club, placements in on-the-job training, vocational counseling, follow-up services, and client-support payments. Many of the remaining "non-PASO" JOBS counties still are in the process of negotiation with OBES local offices. There is no idea yet how many will choose to participate or to what extent.

Activities under the new JOBS interagency agreements began slowly in state fiscal year 1990 as CDHS adapted to the JOBS program requirements. As a result, the number of referrals in the first year fell far short of the levels anticipated by the state agencies, including ODHS. In this second year, the number of referrals has increased, and CDHS offices are working more closely with PASO offices and other state agencies. New agreements have been negotiated for the current state fiscal year.

One important ingredient in the Interagency Task Force agreement between OBES and ODHS is the use of the OBES LMI System for JOBS participants. The LMI system is available through an automated VAX mainframe computer with terminals in local OBES and JTPA offices. About 100 OBES local office staff members were trained to use the LMI system reports for job development research. Training emphasis included system and report access. Case studies illustrated the appropriate application of the various LMI reports. On returning to their offices the staff received hard-wired computer terminals and printers in order to access the system. The JOBS program is a particularly appropriate vehicle for positioning the LMI system in the local offices because the counties tend to place a heavy emphasis on immediate job placement and several of the LMI system reports are designed to assist in that goal.

OBES's agreement with ODHS also allows for payment of certain administrative expenses associated with provision of services. Through the Task Force, OBES participated in a spring conference for local staff employed in the employment and training and human services systems.

As part of its Task Force efforts, the Ohio Department of Development in the spring, 1990, with the assistance of the Task Force's Job Development Committee, issued a request for proposals (RFP) designed to involve Chambers of Commerce, Employment Service and economic development organizations in job development aspects of JOBS implementation. The RFPs that went to local service deliverers solicited programs unique to their areas that would place JOBS participants in positions in demand in their communities. The individual grants were limited to $75,000 and required local-level cooperation, at a minimum, among JTPA Service Delivery Areas, OBES Job Service Offices and local economic development agencies or Chambers of Commerce. No proposals were accepted unless those three local entities were part of the proposal.

Twenty-eight proposals were received and reviewed by representatives of state agencies including OBES. Eleven were selected for funding. Because of the demonstration nature of this program, several types of lead agencies were selected. Of the 11, OBES local offices are the lead agencies in two instances. Each of the programs, scheduled to begin this fall, will be monitored to evaluate outcomes and provide potential coordination models for state and local replication.

The Task Force worked with the OJTCC in 1990 to guide the development of pilot projects in three metropolitan counties that would place up to 100 JOBS participants in positions at major corporations. These pilots are called the "Good Jobs" pilots with the expectation that the jobs would pay relatively high wages and include benefits. An emphasis was put on those proposals including strong employer commitments to job training. Three pilot grants of $150,000 have been made available and placements will begin soon.

Future Directions

In May, 1990, ODHS contracted with a consultant to develop a welfare reform service strategy that will focus on the goal of JOBS participants achieving self-sufficiency by getting jobs for which there is strong labor demand. The study is using available data from OBES' LMI system and other data available from the agency's Labor Market Information division to analyze the supply of and demand for workers in particular entry-level occupations. Once appropriate opportunities are identified, JOBS participants could be guided into those that will most likely result in employment. The plan's ultimate goal is to enhance economic development in Ohio by identifying welfare reform recommendations that simultaneously will reduce welfare dependency and improve the match between labor supply and employers' needs for new employees.

Another Labor Market Information division report that has been useful to counselors is "Wages at Placement." The report lists, by **Dictionary of Occupational Titles** code, each occupation for which the Employment Service has placed at least 10 workers, along with the occupation's mean, median and mid-range placement wages. Because the report is annual and data are reported both statewide and for local markets, it has been a popular publication used to associate realistic wages with entry-level employment. A variation of the report, which lists occupations from highest wage to lowest, is available, and makes it even easier for counselors and clients to identify jobs that likely could lead to economic self-sufficiency.

OBES chairs the Education and Training Subcommittee of the Task Force, which is developing a model assessment method for use with JOBS participants. Assessment is one function that is part of all programs and services touching the JOBS participant, causing frustration by the client and duplication by the programs. With joint or common assessment that could lead to common data collection, policy makers and program operators truly can understand the effectiveness of their actions and adjust accordingly. Ultimately it would be portable and used by other programs and agencies.

Other assignments to the Education and Training Subcommittee include: the development of "performance standards" to be used to define desired outcomes of welfare reform programs; joint planning to ensure the coordination of efforts; and integration of information systems at the state and local level. Given OBES' management of the JTPA and Employment Service systems, the agency is positioned to provide the human services system a valuable perspective on these important policy and program issues.

As Ohio continues its work in JOBS through the OJTCC and the Governor's Interagency Task Force on Welfare Reform, success in system design will be achieved when the employment and training service mechanism for JOBS participants is part of a system that is:

- responsive to the real needs of clients/recipients;
- coordinated and well managed; and
- responsive to the economic needs of Ohio.

With the coordination methods currently in place and with other opportunities for future collaboration still to be discovered, Ohio agencies, including the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services are positioned to develop the most effective strategies for moving welfare recipients from economic dependency to self-sufficiency.

Part 2:
Addressing Unique Situations

40

New Jersey Response Team

by Scott H. Stryker

The Economic Dislocation and Worker Adjustment Assistance Act of 1988 mandated that all states establish a rapid response capability. New Jersey was one of a few states that developed and implemented a Response Team long before Program Year 1989 required implementation. In fact, New Jersey's Response Team served as a model, having gained national recognition after receiving an award in the first Job Training Partnership Act Presidential Awards.

In the past few years, representatives from the New Jersey Department of Labor who have been involved with the Response Team have spoken at many conferences and training sessions regarding Response Team activity.

This was possible because the Response Team has a top priority within the Department in the Divisions of Employment Services, Employment and Training, and Unemployment Insurance, and outside of the Department through the JTPA Service Delivery Areas. Close coordination with the Department of Commerce has been implemented during the past year.

The development of an effective Response Team took time, effort, and strong support by the Commissioner of Labor. In fact, without support from the highest levels, it is doubtful a Response Team could be successful. This is due in large measure to the nature of a Response Team -- a coordinated approach to serving dislocated workers by a number of separate and distinct entities.

Scott H. Stryker is supervisor, Office for Dislocated Workers/Response Team, Division of Employment Services of the New Jersey Department of Labor.

Ensuring coordination

The first step in ensuring coordination is agreement from the various players that they are willing to work together. There must be a written document that spells out the obligations and responsibilities of each agency. Lines of authority must be clear cut to preclude any turf battles, which often occur when a coordinated approach is developed. It took about nine months in 1984 to reach agreement on the design and responsibilities of the New Jersey Response Team. Once that agreement was reached, the Commissioner of Labor issued a directive establishing the Response Team and designating roles and players.

J. Robert White, assistant director, Division of Employment Services, was designated Response Team coordinator. The assistant director, Unemployment Insurance, and the assistant director, Employment and Training, and the JTPA Service Delivery Area representative were named as the other Response Team members. All needed activities in conjunction with plant closings and mass layoffs were to be coordinated through White's office, and all information obtained by any agency or program was to be reported to him. Guidelines for the Response Team were disseminated to all field locations to assure that compliance would occur and that Response Team activity could be coordinated properly.

Procedures for smooth operation of the Response Team were developed and implemented in 1985. Originally, a program operated with JTPA Title 3 funds, the AFL-CIO's - Project Real, was given responsibility for making the initial contact with a company that was closing or dislocating workers through layoffs. Later, when funding was reduced, Project Real was disbanded. One representative was designated the labor liaison and placed on the Department of Labor payroll. It became his responsibility to make the initial contact with companies and arrange for meetings and services as needed. He specifically was designated to deal with unions involved in companies where closings were occurring and obtain their cooperation.

Response Team Objectives

The Response Team's objective is to arrange meetings at which workers being dislocated can be informed of services available through the Department of Labor and the JTPA system. At these "presentation" meetings, representatives from Unemployment Insurance, the Employment Services, and the Division of Employment and Training, as well as local SDA representatives who handle Title 3 training funds, discuss the ways they can assist the workers. Meeting arrangements are made with the affected company, with sessions held on-site during company time whenever possible. Most companies are amenable to such arrangements, but in cases where they are not, arrangements are made through unions to hold meetings off-site with workers during non-work hours.

Each presentation session, including questions and answers, is scheduled for one hour. For large closings, this frequently means multiple sessions so all affected workers can be addressed. The provision of services is accomplished through the completion of forms registering the workers for Unemployment Insurance and the Employment Service, and JTPA certifications for Title 3 programs. This forms completion ideally is done in groups of about 30 people and takes about 90 minutes. It precludes having the dislocated workers report to local offices and be scheduled for services, generally on an individual basis. Paperwork is completed a week or two before the closing occurs. Refinements and modifications to the system and procedures have occurred over the years, but the basic process remains the same.

A special Unemployment Insurance claim form was developed for use only at plant closings. It identifies claimants as dislocated workers. This form is completed by the workers and returned to their personnel officer who submits it to UI following the worker's last day. Booklets explaining the UI system are distributed to all workers after the UI presentation. The ES work registration is completed by workers in groups, coded, entered into the system, and distributed to the ES office closest to the worker's home. A special JTPA Title 3 certification form was developed and is used at all plant closings. These certifications are forwarded to the JTPA agency responsible for the jurisdiction where the workers reside. These procedures, completing all paper work on-site for dislocated workers, preclude their having to do it on their own after layoff. It also helps to assure that dislocated workers will be accounted for adequately and will not "slip through the cracks."

Underlying Objectives

One of the underlying objectives of the Response Team when it was first established was to assure dislocated workers that the government was concerned and prepared to assist. Since JTPA was the first federal program under which individuals could be provided training services without regard to income, most dislocated workers had not contacted government agencies and were skeptical about government in general.

Due to these feelings, there was a reluctance on the part of dislocated workers to take advantage of JTPA Title 3 Dislocated Worker programs. In New Jersey, as in other states, significant underspending of Title 3 Dislocated Worker funds were inadequate to serve the needs of people seeking training. Discretionary grants were sought from the U.S. Department of Labor through the Secretary to assist workers from the larger companies that closed. A greater willingness to participate in Title 3 training programs by dislocated workers has become a fact. In FY '88, 202 companies with 17,500 workers were served. So far (May, 1990) in FY'89, 273 companies and 22,700 workers have been served.

Another aim of the Response Team has been to overcome as quickly as possible the trauma of dislocation and the resulting anger, anxiety and depression that often accompany a job loss. In Response Team presentation meetings, workers are urged to begin looking toward the future and new employment, either through assistance in obtaining a new job or in enrolling in training to prepare for a new occupation. They are encouraged to take advantage of employment counseling and job-search assistance workshops, and advised that the sooner they actively begin to seek new employment, the more likely their good work history will impress potential employers.

A positive attitude is stressed as an important attribute to help the worker in this difficult time. It is pointed out that the aim of the Response Team and the agencies that comprise it is to provide assistance that will help the worker in transition from employment to unemployment and back to new employment. Response Team members must remain upbeat and keep their presentations that way to ensure that dislocated workers remain confident in themselves and in the agencies that are there to help them. Possible difficulties are discussed, but the positive is stressed to minimize the negative side of dislocation.

Response Team Script

Several years ago, a Response Team Script was developed and distributed to the agencies local offices. The purpose was to give local staff members who might be called to participate in Response Team activity a clear idea of the kind of information they should provide to dislocated workers during Response Team presentations. The goal was to assure greater consistency in information presented, but also to allow for flexibility that is so necessary when dealing with the wide variety of workers who face dislocation. Other considerations such as space and time constraints for some presentations are factors that also determine the characteristics of a presentation session.

The need to be flexible, while at the same time assuring consistency of information presented, has been a primary concern when orienting individuals to participate with the Response Team. Training on Response Team participation, which has been developed recently and is being provided to ES, UI, and JTPA staff during June, 1990, stresses both of these concerns while encouraging those involved to "size up their audience" and adapt their presentations appropriately.

Those involved with Response Team activity on a regular basis, such as staff of the Office for Dislocated Workers, Title 3 staff from the Division of Employment and Training, and four district UI technicians have learned the importance of flexibility through experience. Meeting with soon-to-be dislocated workers at their work sites is more comfortable for them, but often is an eye-opening experience for those with the Response Team. That many people work in less-than-desirable conditions which sometimes resemble something out of 19th Century fiction is surprising at the end of the 20th Century. However, these dislocated workers experience the same trauma as their fellow workers who have worked in modern, attractive surroundings. One understands much better the significance of a job in terms of a person's identity and life style when seen from the perspective of Response Team participation.

Because of such experiences, and from follow-up information on what has happened to certain dislocated workers, members of the Response Team frequently point out that many who have experienced dislocation in the past have found a new job, often one based on a new skill learned through training, that they enjoy much better working than the job they lost. Providing information to those about to lose their jobs helps them realize that losing their jobs does not mean the end of the world, but may be the beginning of a new and better life. It also shows them that Response Team members are knowledgeable about similar situations, which helps build needed confidence in government agencies and in their own capabilities. Members of the Response Team attempt to reassure the workers that "We're Here to Help You," which is the title of a brochure distributed at meetings that elaborates on dislocation's consequences.

These efforts contribute to the objective of overcoming the negative feelings associated with dislocation mentioned previously, getting past them, and moving on toward positive feelings and actions in relationship to the future and a new job. As the increased number of dislocated workers being assisted in New Jersey attest, this approach appears to have succeeded in helping dislocated workers begin the process of reintegration into labor force.

A 24-Hour Job Service

by Diana Staley

In the Research Triangle area of North Carolina, the unemployment rate over the past two years has been consistently in the 1.6-2.5 percent range. Many jobseekers currently are employed and looking for a job upgrade or career change, but cannot visit a Job Service local office during working hours. The Chapel Hill/Carrboro Employment Security Commission office developed JONAH (Job News After Hours) in February, 1989, to serve transitional workers in their search for other employment.

JONAH is a self-service, job-selection system designed to help jobseekers unable to visit an Employment Security local office during normal working hours. Job listings are provided in various formats in an attached space to the local office connected with a common wall containing a mail-drop slot. Applicants interested in obtaining employer identification and referral information about a job, complete a referral request form and place it in the drop slot to the local office. Job Service interviewers assigned to handle walk-in traffic on the next work day call the jobseekers and provide the referral information. Details on the procedures involved in using JONAH are described later in this article.

According to the 1987 Hudson Institute report (Johnston), population growth, which climbed at almost 1.9 percent per year in the 1950s, will slump to only 0.7 percent per year by the year 2000. The labor force, which exploded by 2.9 percent per year in the 1970s, will expand by only 1 percent annually in the 1990s. As the baby boomers age and the baby-bust generation (born between 1964-76) enter the work force, the number of workers age 16-24 will drop by almost 2 million, or 8 percent compared to the labor force in 1987.

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Demographic changes create significant implications

Demographics are destiny. State Employment Security agencies will need to tailor their services to address these demographic realities by developing innovative approaches to facilitate the labor exchange function. Not only will Job Service need to attract workers already employed, but also it will need to actively recruit individuals from groups that traditionally have had high unemployment such as vocational rehabilitation clients, the elderly, etc.

JONAH is one example of tailoring Job Service to the local labor market. In the JONAH area are a microfiche viewer, bulletin board, how-to guides on resume preparation, pamphlets on interviewing techniques, labor market publications on occupations in demand, local office application cards, and referral request forms. In the future, a computer terminal may replace the microfiche viewer to provide an automated Job Information Service, which is available in every North Carolina Job Service Center.

Self-service system

Instructions for self-service in JONAH are posted on the bulletin board to guide the jobseeker through the after-hours service. Applicants are informed of the two Job Bank Open Order Indexes available (Triangle and Triad areas) and are given a brief description of the **Dictionary of Occupational Titles** used to group jobs by category. Entries about the indexes, order number, occupational title, minimum pay, duration of job, where job is located, minimum education experience, and age required also are explained. Jobseekers interested in part-time work are asked to check the back portion of the computerized open order printouts. If applicants want a narrative description of the duties and responsibilities listings for a particular job, they must review the microfiche listings for more information.

Although JONAH was established primarily to serve jobseekers currently registered with Employment Security, the system allows for unregistered individuals to complete an application card and place it in the drop slot along with the referral request form. Both veteran and nonveteran applications are available in the JONAH area, and applicants are asked to complete the appropriate card.

Referral request forms are collected each workday morning and applicants are telephoned by noon that day with referral information. If the applicant prefers to call the local office rather than being contacted at his or her place of work, an option exists to call the Job Service after 10 a.m. by noting the referral request form.

"In the public sector, quality is defined by the customer's perception of service delivery, not the legislative parameters of a particular program (Tom Peters, **Thriving on Chaos**, 1987)." Although SESAs must operate under a myriad of laws, rules, and regulations, Employment Security is a governmental entity. Government is a service business. As Employment Security moves toward the 21st Century, local Job Service offices must listen to, and learn from, its customers. SESAs will need to demonstrate flexibility in providing Job Service (job placement, job insurance, and job market information) and be customer driven. JONAH, a 24-hour job service, is only one evidence of how SESAs can respond.

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West Virginia: A Leader in Meeting the Needs of Rural America

by Andrew N. Richardson

West Virginia is the only state contained entirely within the Appalachian Region. Its economy has been affected profoundly by its geography. The interaction between the West Virginian and his land is a common thread throughout the history of the state. The rugged terrain and the bountiful deposits of coal, oil, salt, limestone and clay shaped the nature of the state's economic development. If one views the mountains and not the mineral supply, West Virginia would resemble closely one of the rural New England states such as Vermont or New Hampshire. Yet there are wide economic differences. The fact that the terrain made it more profitable to take the fuels to the factories, rather than the reverse, determined the economic development of West Virginia.

Economies based on the extraction of minerals generally are slower to evolve into "nature" economies than are more broadly based ones. Much of this growth retardation stems from the damage caused by the wildly gyrating "boom/bust" cycles common to basic commodity markets.

Andrew N. Richardson is commissioner of the West Virginia Division of Employment Security.

By never achieving an even level of growth, the infrastructure, labor market and distribution systems seldom match the needs of the resident population.

Contrary to prevailing opinion, the West Virginia economy is at its strongest point in several years. Average insured unemployment stood at 2.8 percent in Fiscal Year 1989, the lowest level since 1967. As recently as FY'83, insured unemployment average 51,174 persons or more than three times the 15,908 total of FY'89. The total unemployment rate has dropped sharply every year since 1983 and stands at 6.4 percent in FY'89, the lowest rate of the 1980s. Total employment is at its highest level since 1982 and should continue its healthy growth.

West Virginia's Job Service is committed to the development and maintenance of a healthy and prosperous state economy. Through the provision of an efficient and effective labor exchange system, Job Service provides state employers with a skilled work force. Job Service also contributes to economic development efforts by providing the people of the Mountain State, especially key decision makers, with current labor market information that helps enable them to make informed decisions.

Success stories

One of the major Job Service success stories was the third annual West Virginia Products Expo, which attracted thousands of visitors to the Elkins National Guard Armory. The two-day celebration allowed area manufacturers in a nine-county region in north-central West Virginia to display their wares and was sponsored by the Job Service Employer Committee. Largely due to its efforts with the expo, the Elkins Job Service Employer Committee was selected as runner-up for the "outstanding Local Job Service Committee" award in federal Region 3 during the 1990 Employers' National Job Service Committee annual conference.

The division's labor and economic research section worked closely with West Virginia University officials to develop a proposal for establishing a new industry in the Mountain State. The plan, known as "The Fly Ash Project," involves the use of pulverized fuel ash to produce a lightweight autoclaved cellular concrete. The ash is a byproduct of coal-fired electric power plants and is readily available in West Virginia, as are the limestone and water needed to manufacture the concrete. Although it has not been produced in the U.S. or Canada, this type of concrete was first developed in 1914 and now is used in 34 countries around the world. It is a major component in up to 90 percent of all buildings in many European nations.

The West Virginia Job Service continues to adapt to a changing environment. The goal of Job Service has been to create equitable access to our services for all employers and jobseekers regardless of their location in the state. To achieve this goal Job Service has developed greater coordination and linkages between programs to provide a diverse range of services to the state's employers and work force. Implementation of new operational methods, and improvements of existing methods, have provided a more efficient means for service delivery.

Nineteen Job Service offices serve the employment needs of the state's fifty-five counties. The average number of counties served by each office is three. Several offices serve a five- or six-county area. Three offices serve an area with less than 10,000 workers living in the area. In many areas of the state, lack of public transportation makes it difficult for residents to travel to the various service agencies in search of help.

The overall efficiency of service delivery and the reduction of operating expenses have been achieved by the collocation of 16 of the 19 Job Service offices with Unemployment Insurance offices. This "one-stop shopping" concept allows for easier access by the public to the services of both Job Service and Unemployment Compensation. In several areas of the state, ES offices have moved into new facilities that also house other service agencies such as Human Services, Veterans Affairs, Workers' Compensation, etc.

Near the end of August, 1989, ES and UC offices in Fairmont were moved to a new office complex, a former department store newly remodeled to house several state agencies' offices. Clarksburg JS and UC offices have been relocated in a state office complex that occupies a former hotel building. In the spring, 1990, the Charleston JS and UC offices moved into a renovated office complex that formerly had been occupied by a department store. The collocation of service providers has enhanced the delivery of services to the local residents of the communities.

Six local Job Service offices in West Virginia have been chosen to participate in the Multi-state Job Bank project. The Multi-state Job Bank is a system designed to allow jobseekers and employers to direct their own labor exchange activities with limited or no intervention by Job Service staff. This system will give applicants and Job Service staff access to job openings in West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia by the use of a computer terminal.

Hours of operation for local offices were changed during 1988 in order to better serve employers, jobseekers and claimants, and to coincide more closely with the office hours of other state agencies' field offices. The hours now are 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., rather than 8:30 - 5:00.

In many of the state's rural areas, itinerant points provide local residents with a variety of services. Currently there are 15 itinerant locations in the state. Work registration, information on job openings, and certification for and referral to Job Training Partnership Act programs are some of the services available to applicant at these locations. Recently the itinerant point locations in several areas have been moved to the local Human Service office, which further increases the convenience to the area's residents.

Currently, 14 of the 19 Job Service offices provide testing for Civil Service position with the state. Previously, many of the state's rural residents traveled long distances to take a Civil Service exam.

Many Job Service and Unemployment Compensations offices share workers. After being trained, Job Service staff can perform Unemployment Compensation functions if slow periods are experienced by JS. Similarly UC staff can perform JS work if the situation is re-versed. Most recently, due to an unexpected budget reduction experienced by Unemployment Compensation and the understaffing of Employment Service in its Targeted Jobs Tax credit Program, the decision has been made to use UC staff on Job Service's TJTC Program. This utilization of UC staff has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of TJTC vouchers and certifications.

New Systems

Following a successful pilot project, a "paperless" or "paper-light" office concept has been implemented throughout the state. The On-Line Data Entry and Display (ODDS) System is designed to be compatible with the Enhanced National Data System. It is a CICS application and is actively on-line for immediate utilization by each local office staff member.

Use of ODDS at each worker's station has eliminated the manual completion of many forms. Local office staff input the work applications, job orders, and service transactions directly to the computer system, and can recall and review forms on the same day. Edits are part of the computer programs, allowing most errors to be caught before the computer batch processes the forms. The result achieved is a time saving per client served, freeing staff to perform other duties.

Additional computerized systems have been implemented that are accessible by the local Job Service offices. SYSM is a menu-driven electronic message distribution system in use in all Job Service offices in West Virginia. It allows sending messages to the 19 Job Service offices and between the local offices and the central office. The system is linked via a mainframe computer system with printers and terminals located in each local office. The use of SYSM allows for almost instantaneous exchange of information between the users.

Great attention has been given to recent studies about American's workers: Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the 21st Century, **Working Capital: Coordinating Human Investment Directions for the 90s, The Common Good: Social Welfare and the American Future**, and **Investing in People: A Strategy to Address America's Workforce Crisis**. There is consensus recognition that training, education, and employment programs must be targeted more and more toward the economically disadvantaged and hard-to-serve. Preparation of young people for the work force, continuing technological and vocation education throughout the career of an employee, child care for working parents, and greater coordination of human resources programs are cited repeatedly in these studies as vital to ensuring America's competitiveness in tomorrow's world economy.

Our environment in the nation, as well as in West Virginia, is changing in a very profound way. We see the challenge before the Division of Employment Security as the need to serve as a catalyst, successfully blending these changing dynamics. Working with our partners in Health and Human Resources, training, education and the private sector, we are facilitating an exciting transformation of West Virginia's work force.

Weslaco: Model Full-service Office in the Rio Grande Valley

by John Stine

> *"Do not wait for extraordinary circumstances to do good; try to use ordinary situations."*
>
> Jean Paul Richter
> German Writer (1763-1825)

Quality service is a tradition at the Texas Employment Commission (TEC) office in Weslaco. From its Highway 83 Expressway address, area manager Ramiro R. Sierra and the 40-plus people he supervises are highly successful at what they do. That is because the office functions in the community as a broker of employment-related initiatives. It is involvement that pays off. That makes Weslaco exemplary -- a model office.

Sierra quoted Richter's foregoing admonition in response to this review's conclusions. Then he added, "So long as we try to help *every single individual* who comes through our doors, our averages are going to look pretty good." That outlook obviously guides his approach to service. This review will identify some of the methods used by the Weslaco staff. Achievements will be described to illustrate the model's success. Many of the facts will speak for themselves.

John Stine is a professional in the Staff Development Division of the Texas Employment Commission.

Yet facts and people tend to make an unstable equation; feelings often influence judgments; ambiguity is common. For these reasons, the reactions and responses of staffers interviewed for this report may well be more important than the design of the building in which the office is housed or the service levels the staff has achieved. To illustrate, much of this report describes how Weslaco's staffers serve the public in an excellent manner. Compassion is thought to be a primary element in that success. It is by no means the most important.

Sierra's optimistic attitude sets the tempo, but it's the can-do approach of the people who work there that consistently gives the Mid-Valley Weslaco office a productivity edge. It's a professional approach to quality service. A closer look at factors involved in good work of this sort can help nearly anyone who wants to excel. Weslaco's model offers an excellent beginning.

Planned community described as shaky venture

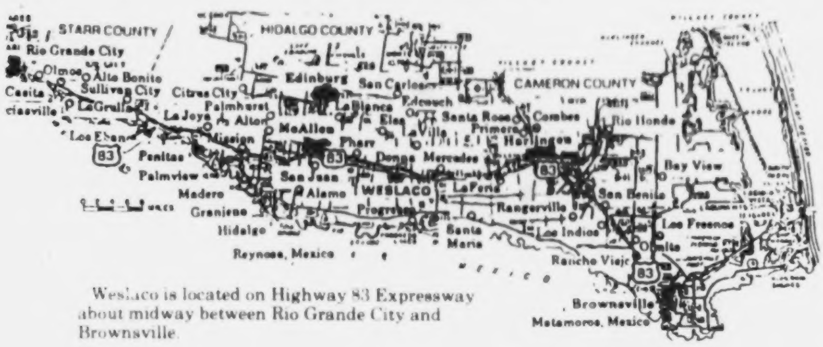
Weslaco, unlike many towns and cities, didn't "just happen." It began as a planned community in the late summer of 1919 according to historical notes found in a brochure published during 1989, by the Weslaco Birthday Celebration Committee. Planned or not, Weslaco's beginnings were still shaky. In the words of one historian, "Some of the other towns got out circulars saying there were already enough towns for any of their good." Still, say the birthday celebration organizers, the real-estate subdividers had enough faith to persist in the sale of lots. All was sold on auction day.

The name of the town is a novel combination of letters. WES stands for Mr. Stewart (of the W.E. Stewart Land Company), LA for Land, and CO for Company. This new name -- Weslaco -- proved acceptable to the purchasers and became the name of the Valley's most carefully planned community. A relative newcomer, the 70-year-old town now prospers on the south side of Highway 83. The 1980 census sets its population at 19,331 and growing (Kingston 1983, 225).

Once featured in **Ripley's Believe IT or Not!** as the longest Main Street in the world, Highway 83, running from east to west between Brownsville near the Gulf of Mexico in Cameron County and Rio Grande City in Starr County in Texas' lush Rio Valley, nearly fills the bill. While Ripley doubtless spoke tongue-in-cheek about the highway, it does pass through 14 towns -- and comes within five miles of 22 others -- in its 60-mile route along the Rio Grande River (Kingston 1983, 184, 225). Travelers scarcely leave one incorporation marker before they come to the next one. City limits become blurred. Urban sprawl appears to be everywhere (See Fig. 1).

Implications for Weslaco are tremendous. From its Mid-Valley location, prospects for commerce and agribusiness activity up and down the busy highway seem unlimited. Citrus groves flourish. Truck farms in the Valley's river bottom delta yield a cornucopia of fresh garden produce. Businesses that serve these interests earn substantial year-round profits while Mexican citizens spill across the U.S.-Mexico border in search of American and imported goods of a quality not available south of the border.

Figure 1. Stylized map of the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas.


STARR COUNTY
HIDALGO COUNTY
CAMERON COUNTY
Rio Grande City
Olmos
Alto Bonito
Sullivan City
Casita
La Grulla
Los Ebanos
83
Penitas
Palmview
Madero
Granjeno
Hidalgo
Reynosa, Mexico
Citrus City
Palmhurst
La Joya
Alton
Mission
Edinburg
San Carlos
Edcouch
La Blanca
Elsa
La Villa
McAllen
Pharr
San Juan
Alamo
WESLACO
Donna
Mercedes
Progreso
Santa Rosa
Combes
Primera
Harlingen
La Feria
Rangerville
Santa Maria
Rio Hondo
Bay View
San Benito
Los Indios
Los Fresnos
Rancho Viejo
Olmito
Brownsville
Matamoros, Mexico

Weslaco is located on Highway 83 Expressway about midway between Rio Grande City and Brownsville.

The area is not without problems. Freezing weather and hail storms can ruin the fruit, devastate truck products, and wipe out tropical vegetation. Overproduction can depress market prices making grove maintenance and harvesting a waste of money. Bankruptcy is not uncommon. Peso devaluation can dry up retail sales and limit tourism. The yearly hurricane season is a five-month (June-October) threat to life and limb that occasionally drowns perishable crops in flood plains. At other times, irrigation is essential. Unemployment consistently runs as high as 30 percent when thousands of jobless migrant and seasonal farm workers return to their homes in the Valley every winter.

In spite of the area's seemingly perennial risks, the Weslaco office excels. Many believe that's because the problems themselves present the office with a unique opportunity to serve. Others feel it's because of a strong work ethic among Valley residents. A few even speak charitably about compassion as the primary motivator. While all of these factors undoubtedly have an influence on outcomes, this study concludes that success is due largely to the attitude each staff member has toward the job to be done.

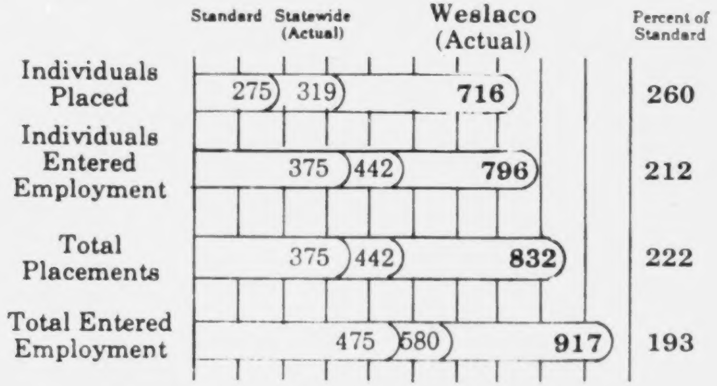
The tale of productivity reports

Perhaps of greatest satisfaction to area manager Sierra, Valley-born and raised with more that 25 years experience with the Texas agency, is the Weslaco office's Unemployment Insurance benefit payment time lapse; 99.03 percent paid within 14 days of the first compensable week on 2,451 UI claims paid over a 12-month period (TEC 1990, 4). That can be compared with what the Department of Labor describes as the "Secretary's Standard" of 87 percent, or the Texas average of 93.5 percent for the same period throughout the state (Jackson 1989, 7).

Weslaco's placement figures also are exemplary. During Program Year 1988 (July 1, 1988-June 30 1989), the office exceeded its assigned quota (percent of standard) in three out of four critical placement categories by more than 200 percent; the fourth was 193 percent (TEC

1989a). That essentially means the office completed twice as much work in finding jobs for workers than might be expected (See fig. 2). Workers placed in jobs by specific category also was exceptional. Within the Corpus Christi region, Weslaco led the productivity list for disabled workers, was second in females placed, and third in the numbers of youth and minority clients served among six full-service offices (TEC 1989b).

Figure 2. Weslaco office placement levels.



Source: Texas Employment Commission, ES Program Management Information PY '88—July, 1988, Thru June, 1989 (page 29).

An analysis of veteran activity shows that Weslaco met or exceeded all placement standards (TEC 189b, 4), and another analysis report shows that staffers excelled in finding jobs for prison parolees in a program known as Project RIO (Reintegration of Offenders). Clients referred to the office were placed at a rate of 91.6 percent in contrast with a state average of 53 percent for the same period (TEC 1989c).

Helping youngsters is another Weslaco office achievement. In cooperation with Weslaco's Jaycees, Sierra and staff registered more than 1,700 teenagers for work in the summer of 1989 in "Operation Opportunity," the area's summer jobs program. It is now a 20-year tradition Sierra originally started in TEC's Harlingen office (Sierra 1989a). Records compiled in October, 1989, show 590 placements for the summer jobs effort, many of whom also were certified for the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit program, a hiring incentive that allows employers to claim a credit of up to 40 percent on their tax liability.

Can-do attitude meets freeze challenge

Weslaco's achievements are not accidental. Evidence indicates it excels precisely because the staff chooses to do so. Perhaps activities and responses of the office's UI supervisor, Carmen Torres, to a devastating freeze that hit the Valley in December, 1989, best illustrates the influence of Weslaco's can-do attitude. Severe enough to prompt the Texas governor to declare the Valley a disaster area (Nettles 1989), Torres and her staff processed more than 300 initial UI claims each day (IAPES 1990, 6).

To make services more accessible to unemployed workers, a temporary UI office was opened at the Mercedes National Guard Armory to supplement services available at the permanent Weslaco office location. Torres assumed responsibility for training the temporary Mercedes staff -- located employees, and the cross training of existing placement staff in the disaster claim format.

Compounding the problem of sheer numbers -- with thousands of workers to be processed because of the Valley's freeze displacement problem -- was a misguided decision by officials of the Mercedes National Guard Armory to evict the Weslaco staffers temporarily processing UI claims in the building. The governor intervened (Nettles 1990a). Even then, of the estimated 15,000 farm workers in Hidalgo County alone, best guesses indicated that as many as 10,000 of them would be without jobs because of the ruined crops (Nettles 1990b).

To better serve the unemployed, other agencies were asked to help. Subsequently the Texas Department of Commerce made $250,000 available to assist displaced workers. Job Training Partnership Act funds were shifted and some were earmarked to take workers "out of the fields and into classrooms, vocational training and temporary jobs." Hidalgo County also applied for funds after designation as a disaster area of about $7.2 million to create 3,000 additional jobs for agricultural workers (Nettles 1990a).

A final, hand-recorded tally of the Valley's 1989 freeze-related activity showed that from among 10 locations set up in the Valley to handle claims, the Weslaco office processed the most. Disaster Unemployment Assistance claims numbered 3,916, while regular UI claims totaled 6,375 over a three-month period. Valleywide, 15,282 DUA claims were processed while 26,853 freeze-related UI claims were filed. Weslaco's shares were 25.6 percent and 23.7 percent respectively.

Additionally:

- Conscientious staffers worked from dawn to dusk. Self-satisfaction often was their only payoff (Pinkerton 1990).
- Leadership provided was positive and unassuming: "The quality of the work done here was not just because I need to work," said Torres, single and self-supporting. "Rather, it's because of the staff I supervise."
- All Weslaco staffers pitched in. The activities of the office's ES supervisor and his staff were typical. During the freeze crisis, he trained security people, connected CRTs, answered questions of anxious clients, and assumed a much-needed, take-charge stance at the often errant lines of displaced workers waiting at the reception point. In addition, he also continued his usual placement supervisory duties while filling in for ES staffers working temporarily on DUA and UI program activities (IAPES 1990,6).

Placement groundwork seen as essential

Born in Ohio of seasonal farm worker parents while in the migrant stream, ES Supervisor Ramon Torres (no relation to Carmen in UI) is a Valley-raised Pan American University graduate with 18 years of agency experience. In a recent interview he said, "We do everything we can here to make placements." That means trying new ideas and looking for better ways of putting people to work.

For starters, he said, the town of Weslaco is our biggest booster. It advertises. One of many promotions is a quarter-page ad appearing every year in **The Texas Almanac** for the Weslaco Industrial Park (Kingston 1983, 45). It also expects the office "to be in its parades and exhibits." The office never refuses.

Weslaco's Chamber of Commerce also is a booster, he said. Area manager Sierra is active as a member of the board of directors. In 1988, he was named Sugar Daddy of the annual "Sugarcane Festival" sponsored by the Chamber (LaGrone 1989; Monitor 1989). In 1987, Sierra served as chair of the "Viva Weslaco!" celebration, and he also is on the vocational advisory committees for both Weslaco and Harlingen Independent School Districts. (Monitor 1989).

Ramen Torres also spoke in glowing terms about the office's involvement with the Mid-Valley Job Service Employer Committee (JSEC) and the Mid-Valley Services Council. While the JSEC approach has been promoted nationally as a viable ES improvement activity, he said the Mid-Valley Services Council is strictly a local networking group, and "they're special."

"Last year (1989)," he said, "area manager Sierra was chair of the council." This year the chair's duties were passed to Ed Ferrero, Torres' good right hand in the placement sector. "I'm real proud of this little can-do group," Ferrero mused. "It's a real winner." Composed of 10 people representing state, county, and city supportive service agencies, they meet quarterly to exchange program information. A recent newspaper account appearing in Harlingen's **Valley Morning Star** credited original sponsorship to local members of the International Association of Personnel in Employment Security (IAPES). Sierra and others launched the effort in 1988, the report noted, in order to link underused resources and make more jobs available.

The office also cultivates media relations, Torres remarked. KRGV-TV in Weslaco has been a big help for a lot of years. Its "Eyewitness News Job Bank" continues to generate as much interest today as when it aired originally, say station executives. Weslaco's **Mid-Valley Town Crier** newspaper usually prints anything Sierra or the local office staff feels to be of importance to the community.

A new way of doing buisness

They call it the "Applicant Responsible Concept (ARC)" in the Weslaco office -- a new way of processing applications and filing claims. Torres says he likes it a lot. Ferrero, a 17-year agency staffer and Texas University graduate, says he thinks it's as revolutionary as sliced bread and equally appealing. Both hardly could contain themselves in describing it.

Basically, it's a system where clients serve themselves. Applicants are seated in groups of 40 or so. They fill out their forms and other paperwork together. Facsimiles are flashed on the walls with overhead projectors. Meanwhile, two staffers serving as monitors circulate to help those with questions and to assure that the forms are completed fully and accurately. Later information from their paperwork is keyed into the agency's computer. When jobs become available, appointment notices are sent to clients' addresses. They return at specific times for specific jobs.

Ferrero told how clients used to wait hours only to be told there was nothing available, "Come back tomorrow, or next week." Many clients knew when they sat down at the Job Information System viewers that there would be no jobs listed for which they qualified. "Many only wanted to get in out of the heat," Ferrero quipped. Now there are no viewers and no unnecessary waiting. ARC has reduced client traffic and caused an increase in placement activity. It gives everyone more time to concentrate on finding those often elusive jobs.

The U.S.-Mexico border has stirred controversy throughout the United States for a very long time. The problem is immigration; Mexicans entering the Valley to live and work. Critics fume about the people who do that illegally. They call them "wetbacks," but until recent years very few really cared about their legal status. Now they do. That is because of the new immigration laws known as the I-9 program: "I" for immigration, "9" for the number of the form all workers now must sign attesting to their legal status.

For employers, the "proof" supporting the I-9 declaration often is the tricky part; only certain documents are acceptable. There are two ways an employer can comply with the new law -- verify every employee's "proof" documents regardless of their citizenship claims and demand that they sign the I-9 form, or have a certificate (I-9a) on file from the Employment Service verifying the worker's legal status. Doubtless, the second method is the easiest. It's also a whole heck of a lot cheaper than doing nothing, Torres remarked. Employers caught using illegal aliens or failing to keep proper records on the legal status of workers can be fined up to $10,000 for each "unauthorized employee."

Shortly after the I-9 program became official, Torres said, Weslaco placement staffers began to comply with the optional certification process. Documents of proof routinely were asked for, inspected and verified. If all was in order, the client was asked to sign the I-9 form. At the time, staffers began educating Valley employers about the merits of accepting referrals from the TEC office based on the agency's certification that a signed I-9 was on file. Torres said acceptance by many employers was immediate. Ferrero verified that several Valley employers simply declared the Weslaco office their "official hiring representative." Without certification from TEC, a worker would not be considered for any job.

The arrangement worked well, Torres said. "The I-9 program with its optional certification feature has increased placements for us because it's a viable service." Ferrero agreed, "When we certify, that takes the employer off the hook. That means they can hire anyone we send them without fear of violating the law because they'll have our I-9a in their file." By catering to the specific needs of employers in this way, the Weslaco office increased its placement share; another can-do initiative.

Turf battle struggles yield to quality service

In the recent past, Valley turf struggles were numerous. Some became downright ugly and abusive. Ultimately, every one of them was extremely wasteful.

The Community Action Program agencies were probably the most disruptive. Each Valley county supported one. In the late 1960s, they vied with TEC's Manpower Development and Training Act programs. In the 1970s, the conflicts threatened the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act approach to skill development and remedial education. Heavy promotion irritated many employers.

Another program with massive funding was Service Employment Redevelopment, a jobs program administered exclusively for Mexican-American and other Hispanic clients. It was a very aggressive Valley competitor in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Many non-minority clients resented its exclusive nature. Even a few of its favored clients disliked its approach.

Also vying with local TEC offices for jobs was the Work Incentive Program for clients of the state welfare agency's Aid to Families of Dependent Children assistance program. Ironically, while administered and staffed largely by TEC, WIN contacts and it OJT contracts often overlapped and duplicated the job development efforts of local TEC office staffers. The Weslaco office was no exception.

At the same time, private personnel agencies were struggling to establish a profitable toehold up and down the Rio Grande Valley. They wanted a shot at placing job training program graduates in jobs for a fee. One of those was located in Weslaco. Others operated out of McAllen. Competition was often fierce. Heated words and accusations were common.

Today much of that has changed, Torres said. Now there's only one competing jobs training program of any significance. After the owner of the oldest personnel agency in McAllen died a few years back, they closed the office and never reopened it. As for other firms, Manpower, Inc. still is active in McAllen, but since it deals primarily in temporary jobs and workers, it is not considered a competitor. The Weslaco office is more interested in permanent jobs.

As for the Job Opportunity and Basic Skills program, Torres said, "we're getting along together pretty well. That's due to a rather unique cohousing arrangement we have here." Known locally as CHDCA (County of Hidalogo Department of Community Affairs), it is Hidalgo County's JTPA program. County Judge Edgar Ruiz oversees the program and accounts for its funding from Edinburg (the county seat), yet space for JTPA staffers has been made available in the Weslaco TEC office.

"Today we've got 12 to 16 (12 regular employees and four temporaries) of their people here just to be neighborly. We kind of like it that way." Since the JTPA staff concentrates a lot on classroom education and OJT, that gives TEC staff a chance to find jobs for those persons when their training is over. "You might say it's a trade-off. We give 'em space, they allow us to place their clients. Those numbers sure look good on our reports."

Can-do from a service representative's perspective

Margie Knoll is from Missouri. While living there, she worked 25 years for that state's Employment Security agency, a good part of it as a supervisor in its tax department. When her husband retired in early 1989, it was their decision to move to the Sun Belt's Rio Grande Valley. Weslaco was the city of choice.

"I considered myself fortunate to get work so soon," Knoll reminisced. Starting in September as a temporary, she worked a placement desk until being laid off in December. "I was crushed," she said, but rebounded after the holidays when notified that the office had a service representative opening. "When they told me, I was excited. When they hired me, I was elated. Weslaco is truly a model office, and I'm grateful to be working with such a wonderful group of people."

Knoll's supervisor, Torres, also is excited about Knoll's assignment. "She's a breath of fresh air," he said. She brought some ideas. She is willing and flexible. Her attitude remains positive and supportive. For instance, when two placement people were on the ailing list, Margie covered for them. The next day she resumed her outside contacts. It's today that counts. Placements won't wait, so she was "up to her elbows" in finding jobs for everyone.

We do a lot of job-development work here, Knoll said. "I believe that's what service means," she added. But then, she said, so does the rest of the staff. That's why it's such a great place to work.

"What difference can I make? I'm only a clerk." "I'd tell you what I think but nobody cares. I just work here for the money. Pay me and leave me alone." Too often comments such as these are commonplace in government offices -- they've become the rule, not the exception. Some blame our social environment with its "gimme, gimme!" approach to government's service role. Others fault teachers and other role models for their tentative, half-hearted commitment to helping others.

Fortunately, the Weslaco office is a model precisely because of the likes of Lucy Cantu. Classified in the broad category of support personnel, she serves as area manager Sierra's secretary/clerk/typist/treasurer/news release writer/counselor and conscience. She also serves IAPES, the Boy Scouts of America, and Cub Pack #100 from Weslaco's St. Pius Church.

Cantu learned the value of personal achievement initiatives from her Puerto Rican background while growing up in Waukegan, Ill. Moving to Weslaco in 1987 with her Ohio-born Navy husband who wanted to raise his family in the Rio Grande Valley, she and her three children quickly adapted. Community acceptance was kindled by their enterprising talents at church and at work.

Typically, Cantu never refuses to help. When 21 teenagers were accidently killed in the Rio Grande Valley in one of the state's worst school bus disasters, she served as treasurer of a special fund-raising activity to commemorate the loss of life (Sierra 1989, 8). She and others in the Weslaco community, as well as members throughout the state IAPES chapter, were instrumental in raising and ultimately depositing more than $500 in a trust fund established for the families of those who died. (IAPES 1990a, 3).

Recently, when asked what she disliked most about her job, Cantu replied without hesitation, "Unhappy clients." Superlatives aside, it seems obvious that her effect on others in Weslaco's model office comes from an undeniable can-do attitude. She inspires.

Little contributions that can yield big dividends

Weslaco's office staff often supports the community in "little" ways, although area manager Sierra sees every act of community participation as a positive one. "People helping people," he says. A recent example involved two competitive bicyclers, Marlo Reyna and Hector Solis. An article in the Texas IAPES chapter's publication reported, "The reason: completion by the duo of 42 miles of racing in the Brownsville Classic -- Marlos's 2 hour and 21 minute finish, and Hector's 2:25 time." (IAPES 1990c, 11). Physical fitness was the organizer's overriding theme.

Staffers also participate in community taco sales and other fundraising activities. At Christmas, they collected clothes and toys for needy families. Year-round, they support neighborhood churches and playgrounds for the youngsters. In most instances, their participation is always with a flair. Few are not aware that Weslaco's staffers are proud of their jobs and the agency that promotes work for Valley residents.

Recent changes along the border could mean big dividends for Weslaco in the near future. While their effect already has been to greatly help the Texas economy, Weslaco has been left out. Area manager Sierra hasn't given up hope though. He's planning now for Weslaco's future.

Known as "maquiladoras," the activity they generate has meant jobs -- lots of them -- for Valley workers on both sides of the border. It also has meant some problems. Labor unrest is becoming more common (Associated Press 1990). While Sierra admits that problems can exist, he is more interested in the positive side -- jobs for Weslaco's residents when"twin plants" with their massive hiring potential move into the area (Stine 1988, 32).

"We're working for the future on this one," Sierra said. It's business wanted and needed. Other towns in the Valley have maquiladoras. Criticized because it didn't have a foreign trade zone, Weslaco invested $50,000 to establish one. Working closely with Weslaco's Chamber of Commerce and other business interests, we've enlarged our industrial park and expanded our little airport. Now with the foreign trade zone in place, we're ready to deal (Hodges 1987, Langan 1987)."

Doubtless, Sierra and staff fully intend to be ready when the first maquiladora prospect shows an interest in Weslaco. It's one of our "big hopes," he said. We're convinced it could easily develop into a "major industrial empire," an observation noted by others (Stine 1988, 45).

The growing support for consolidated government

A novel item on the Valley's demographic agenda involves economics -- the argument that bigger is better. H & H Foods President Reuben E. Hinojosa of Mercedes proposed during a recent Valley leadership forum that the area would be better served if it were all one large Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area. In his view, the consolidation of four counties -- Cameron, Willacy, Hidalgo and Starr -- should be a priority; the creation of one gigantic community (Hodges 1990). That also would likely make Ripley's "longest Main Street" reference a very accurate one.

Hinojosa claimed such a move would make great savings possible for the entire Valley. There would be less duplication of effort, he said, and there also could be significant strides made in improving the Valley's educational system. As proof of its need, he pointed to two sewage plants belonging to two different communities recently built across the highway from one another. Consolidate, he said, and discontinue use of one or the other.

Sierra remarked this was not the first time Hinojosa has advanced his consolidation proposals. In the past, critics were quick to point out the ridiculous nature of Hinojosa's notion. The difficulties of governing an area 60 miles long and 40 miles wide, they argued, would make it unworkable.

The idea now seems to be gaining some support. Screw ups like the duplicate sewage plants make the idea more appealing. While Weslaco staffers have no formal contingency plans for dealing with a massive city of Valleywide proportions, they aren't ignoring the possibilities either. It could happen. If it does, Weslaco's reaction most likely would be positive and not totally unexpected. Typically, look for Sierra and staff to mount a massive campaign. The most logical place for a new City Hall, after all, is Weslaco. Such is the power of the can-do attitude. Today, the Weslaco office thrives because of it.

Evidence gathered from Weslaco office staffers seems to indicate that clients are best served when people care. Compassion is the key. It also is suspected that spacious offices or ample parking lots do not guarantee adequate worker-client services. Neither do professionally designed, well-equipped modern buildings or clinically developed and validated assistance programs calculated to correct specific social inequities. Attitudes appear infinitely more important. A positive frame of mind seems to be a clear necessity.

Sierra and the others in the Weslaco office also seem to be of the opinion that today it is not enough to just be right. Responsible stewardship requires more. Managers must be able to show how, to teach, and not just direct. Staffers must be willing (indeed, eager) to tell clients of options available to them; to advise and encourage, not just brush personal choice aside in a "take it or leave it" approach.

The Weslaco office is a model of efficient production, quality service and community involvement. It should be an inspiration to similar Employment Security offices across the nation. That is because excellence is a product. It starts with a can-do attitude and includes a conscious decision to do the job right. In other words, it's a choice. Like all choices, it takes a commitment. The promise of Weslcao's can-do model is ours to make; a personal goal. That is because exemplary achievement begins with individual initiative. Models of excellence are no exception.

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One of a Kind

by Bud Cork

The Texarkana employment office is neither fish nor fowl, neither Texas nor Arkansas, but the best of two worlds -- an employment office bi-state in nature, both Texas and Arkansas rolled into one, under one roof, dedicated to serving applicants and employers from both states without confusion and in their best interest.

In this office, teamwork and cooperation walk together through the work areas in a manner that makes the states ambiguous, without title, without identity, but with a oneness of purpose that defies reason when it is considered that the employment interviewers work with two non-compatible computer systems, two separate claims' laws, and with employers in five counties located in two states.

There have been more than 30,000 individuals administered the General Aptitude Test Battery since April, 1986. During the period 1979-89, the office placed 63,844 individuals on jobs, which averages 5,804 individuals placed per year in the Texas and Arkansas service areas of the office. This in itself is outstanding, but at the same time millions of dollars of Unemployment Insurance were paid to claimants.

These facts are not brag, just honest facts. The most amazing portion of the operation is that participation in two Job Training Partnership Act areas (Southwest Arkansas and Northeast Texas) is a must for the office. The staff of the Northeast Texas Service Delivery Area is outstationed in a 14,000-square-foot Texas Employment Commission-owned building.

Purvis (Bud) Cork is manager of the Texarkana local office, Texas Employment Commission. He may be the only person in the nationwide Employment Security system who can hire or fire employees in two states.

The Southwest Arkansas SDA now operates out of its own facility, but at JTPA's onset its staff also was provided free space in the building. There have been several contracts under JTPA Titles 2, 3, or 7, and the office consistently has exceeded goals. The togetherness of being housed with JTPA, and with all applicants prescreened for JTPA services, makes for a successful working relationship and assures the area applicants of "one-stop shopping" for employment security and training.

The facility, unlike the U.S. Post Office, which sits exactly "straddle" of the Texas/Arkansas state line, is located two blocks on the Texas side of town at 1118-1120 Wood St. in a one-story brick building. The utilities (light, heat and water) are paid by the Arkansas Employment Security Division. As the building is owned by the Texas Employment Commission, the janitorial, groundskeeping and building maintenance are Texas' responsibilities. The telephone system is provided by Arkansas, but Texas provides two Texan lines for long-distance service. The JTPA entity has its own phone system with separate lines. Supplies are furnished by both states, up to and including copy machines, desks, files, etc.

Computers create problems

The two computer systems being different and incompatible, create some problems as most of the Employment Services intake is entered directly into the Texas system. Those functions related to Arkansas are keyed from Texas copy or Arkansas hard copy to the Arkansas system. Nothing is double counted. No matter an applicant's residence, if the person is placed on an Arkansas job order, it is an Arkansas placement. If the person is placed on a Texas job order, it is a Texas placement. This causes a bit more work, as all applications and I-9 forms (immigration verifications) must be keyed to both states so any applicant in the service area will be exposed to all jobs in either state. This has worked well for years, but it does require honesty and extra knowledge on the part of the office employees.

Claims are another matter. Each state has to utilize its own forms, laws, computer systems, appeals process, etc. It requires two computer links to allow base wage searches to be conducted in Texas and Arkansas on every new claimant who contacts the office. An enormous amount of combined wage claims are filed in the office. Texarkana is the center of "The Four States Area." Louisiana is about 25 miles south, and Oklahoma about 30 miles northwest. Texarkana has more than a bi-state applicant/claimant pool. Near Texarkana is Red River Army Depot, one of the largest federal installations; Cooper Tire and Rubber Co., which makes tires for more than 10 major brand tire companies; and two of the largest paper mills in the world (one in Domino, TX, 13 miles south of Texarkana, and the other in Ashdown, AR, 20 miles north). These four major employers pay excellent salaries and have great employee packages, thus causing many area workers to come to the Texarkana office seeking employment. The office handles all hiring for these industries.

There are several subsidiary industries resulting from these major leaders, such as Day & Zimmermann, Inc., which has a work force of more than 3,000. Alumax Mill Products has the most advanced rolling mill in the nation, and in fact, its products are in such great demand due to their quality, that no sales staff is needed and there are orders on file through the next decade.

Located in geographic center

The point of this explanation is that Texarkana is located in the geographic center of the four states area. The transportation availability and accessibility to raw materials and water is such that the office is almost "fed" with applicants.

The most beautiful part of the operation is the compatibility of the employees from the respective states. The office is managed by a Program Specialist 2 who is a Texas employee. He is supported by an Administrative Assistant/Employment Supervisor 3 who is a Texas employee, and a Program Operations Manager who is an Arkansas employee. The other office supervisors are split, with two-thirds being Texas and one-third being Arkansas. The programs are not split according to states. The claims supervisor is funded through Arkansas, and the placement supervisor through Texas, but neither they nor their employees, show any preference to applicants or to the states. They just tend to business in a professional way. All employees in Texarkana must know two laws, have two ways of doing things, and wait on the public with as little confusion as possible and report the activity in an honest, fair manner so the goals of each state are attained. Two reporting systems are outside the understanding of most Employment Service employees, but in Texarkana they are a necessity, a way of life.

The Texarkana office always has been a participant with the Texarkana Chamber of Commerce. A Labor Market Analyst is outstationed in the Texarkana office. This arrangement has been successful in luring a number of businesses to the area through the ability to provide labor market information on a local basis with very short notice.

The office goes a step further in that JTPA on-the-job services are offered to employers in the area any time an employer visit is made. Texas and Arkansas both have their local tax office staff in the office, so tax questions by employers often work into job orders, due to the cohesiveness of the staff, who without reservation represent all programs.

Unique employer involvement

Perhaps one of the major strengths in recent years is the one-of-a-kind, bi-state Job Service Employer Committee/Local Employer Advisory Committee that is comprised of employers from both Texas and Arkansas. The committee not only addresses the good things available, but also works out tedious employer problems and brings employer ideas into the actual operation of the local office. Several improvements in service have come as a result of employer contributions.

Texarkana may not be a model bi-state operation, but it is an exercise in togetherness from the two state administrators down to the clerical staff in the local office. It is a pride that Texarkana is "twice as nice." It is an extension of good people working together to give the taxpayers a just return on their investment. It could just be that there is less jealousy and more compatibility between the employees of two states in Texarkana than anywhere in the entire nation. Texarkana stands ready to challenge any who feel that a bi-state arrangement will not work. The office has existed with gratifying statistical results since the days of World War II and before. Few, if any, examples of togetherness have stood such a test of time.

Part 3:
Creating Local Office Models

One-Stop Service for Application Taking and Eligibility Determinations for Job Training, Job Placement, and Unemployment Insurance

by Lyle L. Halvorson

The Minot, North Dakota, Job Service office has implemented an intake unit where jobseekers can complete applications for work, be referred to jobs, file a claim for Unemployment Insurance, and complete an application for job training programs, all in one stop. In North Dakota, Job Service is the umbrella agency responsible for the administration of Job Training Partnership Act programs, Unemployment Job Insurance, Wagner-Peyser, job placement programs and other Employment Security programs.

In North Dakota all public Employment Service, Unemployment Insurance, and job training services are delivered out of Job Service local offices using a "one-stop shopping" approach to employment and training programs. North Dakota is a single Service Delivery Area. Since JTPA's inception in 1983, the state's Private Industry Council has selected Job Service to administer and deliver federally funded Job

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Lyle L. Halvorson is public information director of the Job Service of North Dakota.

job training programs and services in the state. According to Mike Deisz, executive director of Job Service, this integrated approach to service avoids duplication and provides better service to jobseekers and the business community.

Before the combined intake unit was established in August, 1989, the Minot office basically had three different intake points. If a person wanted to file a claim for Unemployment Insurance, the client had to see a claims taker. Then to be referred to any job openings, the client would go back and wait in the lobby until a placement interviewer was available. If the client also was interested in job training, the client would again have to wait in the lobby until a job training representative was available, and then complete a third application form.

New system benefits applicants

Don Stokke, regional manager of the Minot Job Service office, said, "With the reductions in staff we've had, we were having a hard time handling the traffic. Also, depending upon the time of year, certain sections of the office couldn't keep up while another unit might be slow. This new system has been a real benefit for the applicants. We don't have people waiting in the lobby for long periods of time."

Under the new structure, all applicants are routed to an interviewer in the intake unit. At that point they can file a claim for Unemployment Insurance and complete a JTPA eligibility form. They are scheduled back to attend a video-assisted orientation and application-taking session in a group setting. The same staff person updates the individual's work application, takes the client's Unemployment Insurance claim, does a job training program eligibility review, or refers the client to a job, all in one stop.

If a person is eligible for JTPA training, they are walked back to a job training assessment unit where they meet briefly with a job training staff person. The client is scheduled back for testing, counseling, or other assessment services. As the administrative entity for JTPA programs, Job Service's responsibilities include all intake, eligibility determination, client assessment, and creating an employment development plan for each job training program applicant. In addition, Job Service writes on-the-job training contracts with private employers.

Job Service is in the process of negotiating a contract with the state's Human Services Department to administer the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program established under welfare reform. Effective April 1, 1990, participants in JOBS are included in the common application-taking process.

Helps JTPA clients

Combined delivery of Employment Security and job training programs through Job Service offices also helps JTPA participants because they are exposed to more on-the-job training opportunities through Job Service, and they stand a better chance of finding permanent, unsubsidized employment because of the number of jobs listed with Job Service. If a client is job ready, that person's application is put into the automated system for selection and referral to jobs. Applicants have the option to schedule themselves for other services, like job-search assistance workshops.

The Minot office currently has a staff of 30, of which seven work in the new intake unit. The placement unit, which takes and works job orders, makes job development contacts, and handles employer relations, has a staff of five. The assessment unit, which handles all JTPA activity, counseling, and Job Corps recruitment and screening, has a staff of six. As workload warrants, staff can be switched from one unit to another. Applicants for Unemployment Insurance (UI) as well as UI eligibility reviews are handled by the intake unit.

"Like anything new, the staff was apprehensive at first," Stokke said. "We've run into a few glitches here and there that we've had to overcome, and I'm sure we'll run into more. But now I think the staff really likes it. I think the biggest advantage for us is that we're giving the applicants more humane treatment and not shuffling them around. Clients are happier and their attitudes are better. That benefits our staff too, because the clients are more receptive to our services."

Advantages for employers

Stokke says there are also some advantages to employers. The office now has key placement interviewers so employers are likely to work with the same placement interviewer.

"It's really very simple," Stokke said. "For people who have Unemployment Insurance in one office, the Employment Service in one office, and JTPA programs in a different office, it's probably difficult for them to visualize how this can work. Before we went to this system, people would be bounced from place to place for the various services and oftentimes one unit would be overloaded and others would not be busy. The biggest advantage of this is it smooths out the traffic flow and shortens the waiting time in the lobby."

In early 1990, several other local offices in North Dakota began implementing the intake unit concept. For more information contact: Mr. Don Stokke, Regional Manager, Minot Job Service, P.O.Box 1727, Minot, ND, 58703; or call 701/852-2164.

Community Service Centers: Helping NY Work -- Better

By Thomas F. Hartnett

The New York Department of Labor's mission is to prepare people for the jobs of today and tomorrow -- to help New York work. The department delivers hundreds of services designed to help people find jobs and employers find workers, to support workers and their families when they have lost their jobs through no fault of their own, and to maintain workplaces that are safe, healthy, and fair.

We are proud of these services because they give New York the reputation of a state that cares about workers and cultivates its work force. This pride in programs and services is a positive thing, but it can blind an agency and its employees to changes in the work force and the economy. Too often, we as providers are encased in a Maginot Line of programs and policies that don't have the flexibility to meet changing needs of the people who depend on us.

In 1987, the Department of Labor made a conscious decision to spend less time trying to repeat past successes and to retool our delivery system to prepare for the future. Major factors in the revamping process were:

- Diversity of our customers -- veterans, youth, job seekers, businesses.
- Recognition that each community has different needs and resources.
- Need for coordination between state and federal programs.
- 5,200 knowledgeable employees poised to move DOL ahead.

Thomas F. Hartnett is New York state Commissioner of Labor.

Facing the future

Historically, the department has been organized according to program divisions from the deputy commissioners all the way to the point of delivery. This has meant separate service delivery systems, often separate offices, and sometimes even separate buildings providing different, but related services to the same community.

Futhermore, our services were related closely to those provided by other state and local agencies and community-based organizations, again often in different locations. An unemployed person seeking work might have to visit two or more locations in the course of receiving financial assistance and help in finding a job before they even visit a prospective employer.

To help sharpen the focus of our efforts, I commissioned an interdepartmental Executive Committee to survey the department and its programs. Its mission was to determine how efficiently and effectively we were meeting the needs of individuals, employers, and communities and to recommend improvements. The Executive Committee made four main observations about the Department and its services:

1. Department of Labor programs were operating as separate organizations, making teamwork, effective resource management, and long - term planning nearly impossible.
2. Physical separation of services sent customers from office to office, line to line, trying to coordinate programs on their own.
3. The statewide view of each program's policies was at odds with the needs of individual communities. Some areas have labor surpluses, others labor shortages. Many urban areas suffer low literacy and academic competency rates. Rural areas often lose economic development opportunity to out-migration. Suburban areas have still other issues to address.
4. Department of Labor employees are not only well versed in programs, but also intimately aware of the needs of the customers they serve and the communities where they live.

It was apparent that we needed better coordination of services to benefit customers and staff alike. Also, we needed to build in flexibility to help communities address unique economic situations and labor force trends.

Changing our way of delivering service

The Executive Committee used its observations to design a process that would revamp the way we operate our local offices and reassert our presence in the community. We wanted to restructure department procedures and policies to emphasize customer service to jobseekers as well as businesses. The new structure would meld employees in all program areas into a team delivering coordinated service to the entire community -- thus the name Community Service Center. The centers combine Department of Labor services with employment, training, education, and intervention programs offered by other state agencies, local governments, and community-based organizations.

We invited the staffs of our 111 local offices to propose changes to their facilities that would improve service delivery and coordinate programs. The proposals had to include:

- Changes to physical plants to decrease waiting time and increase the professional environment.
- Establishment of an common intake point for service referral.
- Collocation of Job Service, training and Unemployment Insurance programs both for the convenience of UI recipients and to encourage them to use training, counseling, and placement services.
- Consultation with other service providers to ensure access to a full range of available employment services.

Eighty-four offices submitted proposals. An internal consulting committee of employees representing all program areas offered technical assistance to local teams as they discussed ideas and developed proposals. The process of converting our primary selections from regional offices to Community Service Centers, including physical plant alterations, took just a little more than a year.

Centers take shape

The first Community Service Center opened in Niagara Falls on Oct. 18, 1988, followed in rapid succession by offices in Gloversville, Newburgh, and North Syracuse. Although each center is unique and designed to meet specific community needs, certain elements remain constant:

- Common intake area -- An attractive, professional-looking reception desk, staffed with employees who are able to answer questions regarding all department programs, whether they be Unemployment Insurance, Job Service, health and safety, or labor standards.
- Job Service and Unemployment Insurance -- Both services offered at the same location so that people who lose their jobs through no fault of their own can experience one-stop shopping for job leads and financial assistance to support themselves and their families during their job search.
- Community resource boards--information centers for services provided locally including adult education courses, nutrition programs, job openings, child care facilities, social services, and youth programs.
- Self-search job stations/Jobs Plus Terminals -- User-friendly computers and touch-screen terminals that contain statewide information on jobs that match the job seeker's skills, as well as information on day care, counseling, shelter, and support services.
- Kiddie Korners -- A safe, attractive play area for children who must accompany their parents.
- Meeting rooms/testing areas -- Facilities for on-site recruitment offered to local businesses and organizations, with technical support to improve selection techniques, promote employee development, and refine personnel policies.
- Evening hours -- Flexible hours that accommodate the needs of different customers at all centers.

- Other services -- A widerange of other state and private agencies including veteran's groups, Job Training Partnership Act entities, Office of the Aging, counseling organizations, and others have been invited to use our facilities on a regular schedule.

There are now 18 Community Service Centers (CSC) in operation across the state. We plan to have nearly 100 up and running over the next four years.

Reorganizing our personnel structure

While these changes were taking place out in the field, it became necessary to look closely at the department's overall organizational structure. We set in motion a restructuring that would apply the CSC philosophy of community involvement and integration of department services to the entire agency. An important step in this process was to establish a community services division with primary responsibility for all service delivery at the community level. Other major features of the proposed restructuring include:

- Fewer levels of supervision in the organizational hierarchy -- four layers of reporting responsibility reduced to one.
- Nearly 100 managerial positions to be eliminated through attrition over the five - year implementation period.
- Broad banding of titles and expansion of scope, responsibility, and authority of all managerial positions and many other positions.
- Compensation and promotion to recognize the increased responsibilities imposed by the new structure and to reward excellence at all levels.
- A system for developing and training staff for new duties and preparing them to take on greater responsibility through clear standards of performance.
- Major emphasis on the importance of customer service, integration of services, improved communication and cooperation, streamlined operations, and appropriate elimination of unnecessary bureaucratic procedures.
- Creation of an organizational environment that emphasizes teamwork, collaboration, innovation, and risk taking.

The most critical of these changes was the institution of a series of training programs. People who once dealt strictly with Unemployment Insurance or Job Service were cross trained so they can address the needs of both the unemployed and the first - time job seekers more completely. They received additional briefings on the full range of Department of Labor services to reinforce existing knowledge bases.

To compensate employees for these added responsibilities, the department obtained approval from the Department of Civil Service to combine UI claims examiner and employment interviewer positions at two levels into new, upgraded titles of labor services representatives and supervising labor service representatives.

CSC's shadow the future

It is my intention that these changes to the management structure of the department produce a coherent, streamlined hierarchy capable of effectively managing the Community Service Centers and provide the same emphasis on service delivery. I see the integration of services that we are implementing here as a forerunner of the state government office of the future.

Many state agencies currently provide good service. What blocks them from excellence is the lack of coordination between components of related programs. The need for coordination combined with the realities of budget and staffing for the 1990s dictates that the public sector agencies deliver comprehensive packages of services.

Our experience at the New York State Department of Labor has been that if we all focus on the needs of the individual customer, the bureaucratic "turf" issues in time fade away. This commitment shows at Community Service Centers where we are helping New York work -- better.

The Idaho Story: Model Office Operations - ES, UI, LMI, JTPA

by Tom Valasek

Idaho is a state of contrasts -- Alpine mountain ranges and barren desert; an inland seaport only 700 feet above sea level and a multitude of mountain peaks with five digit altitudes; a northern boundary of only 50 miles and a southern border stretching more than 300 miles; a Democratic governor negotiating with a Republican legislature. Even our relatively sparse population, which flirts inside and outside the 1 million range, congregates sporadically throughout the state, unlike most surrounding states whose populations tend to migrate toward one locale.

How does a thinly staffed state department whose mission is "full employment and economic security" take on such a task in such an environment? The answer is by thinking big and small at the same time. As opposed to a network of a few large offices serving a concentrated population, Idaho has located 24 Job Service offices strategically throughout the state, each offering a full range of Employment Services, Unemployment Insurance, and job training services. With half of these local offices staffed with five or less people, the challenge lies in offering an extremely large variety of services with very few staff persons. Meeting this challenge requires a highly dedicated staff with a high degree of cross training, utilizing a highly automated delivery system.

Tom Valasek is administrator, Operations Division of the Idaho Department of Employment.

The link

This is where the "big" comes in. Our department has a history of making significant investments in automation. Automation is the common link that ties all programs together. Local offices use the system to take job orders. They use the system to contact applicants (auto-dialers) and refer them to jobs. They use the system to establish and pay UI claims, and to issue eligibility determinations. They use the system to enroll and track training participants. Almost everything we do involves the use of automation to get the job done.

Our working environment makes cross training an operational necessity, but busy managers, busy staff, and long distances to travel for training sessions also make training a logistical ordeal. Automation again assists in overcoming these problems. Personal computer (PC)-based training materials are provided to local offices so staff can work on them at their convenience and at their own pace. But what about learning to operate PCs in the first place?We've automated that, too, by linking administrative trainers to local office staff via PCs and modems, so they can train field personnel from the comfort of their fourth-floor cubicle.

Duplication is anathema

With resources stretched as they are in our agency, any duplication of effort seriously erodes our ability to serve the needs of our geographically dispersed population. "One-stop shopping" in Idaho's employment and training industry is no innovation, but long has been an economic necessity.

That is not to say the Department is without competitors. Our 24 local office managers combine into six management teams that submit well-planned, well-costed and well-delivered Job Training Partnership Act proposals to the Private Industry Councils. One Idaho PIC utilizes Job Service as practically its sole source for job training, while in another, we are only a minor deliverer in an array of more than a dozen service providers.

Under the new welfare reform Job Opportunity and Basic Skills legislation, Idaho's Health and Welfare agency has elected to pursue competition for the delivery of employment services to its participants. Does this concern us? The answer is a resounding, "yes." We would be disturbed to see other public organizations duplicate the kinds of employment assistance activities that we already have in place.

The issue of competition in the public sector has not received a significant amount of air time from national decision makers. The exception would be the recent criticism that the JTPA system has taken in the press regarding private-sector priorities in the delivery of the nation's job training programs. These journalistic discussions would suggest that there may be a constituency that does not like the current legislative strategies put in place to deal with the complex problems of human resource development.

Goal is connection

Be that as it may, the Idaho Department of Employment continues to pursue opportunities aggressively to forge its link in this human resource development process. The goal is to be the labor market connection as opposed to the "grand deliverer" of all imaginable program designs. We hook into teen-parenting programs, homeless programs, alternative schools, migrant streams, economic development strategies, plant closure responses, etc. The "hook" is our labor market expertise. We always must be mindful of that fact. A Job Service without strong service connections to the employer community could become an expendable byproduct of past social experimentation.

Sophisticated computers and a full array of services do not equate automatically to satisfied customers. Our department prides itself in providing quality services through a friendly, capable staff. In order to emphasize our commitment to our customers, we have implemented a training package of 15 modules designed to sharpen skills in teamwork, customer service, and a broad array of other human interaction skills. Field staff are offered this training by a cadre of local office managers who have been trained to facilitate these discussions. The obvious advantage of using line management as facilitators is their capability to provide insights on the application of these skills in a local office setting.

The experts

The Job Service employee who provides services to the public on a daily basis is our best resource in determining how the job can be done better. In Idaho, we constantly tap into that resource. We use"Action Teams" that combine field and administrative personnel to modify and improve our delivery systems continually. Right now, we have a team reconfiguring our automated placement system and another revising our UI benefits-rights video. A team recently tapped our local office PC network to automate our UI nonmonetary determination process, while another totally revamped our performance appraisal system.

Not everyone has the opportunity to participate on one of these teams. In order to broaden our base of staff input, we have implemented a heavily used suggestion system that bypasses the various layers of management, with each idea individually analyzed by our executive staff.

The new Coeur d' Alene office typifies the emerging concepts of partnerships and teamwork. The office has been located in an area of professional buildings and sits right across the street from the Department of Health and Welfare. Collocated in the building are offices for the state Department of Labor and the Industrial Commission. The interior has four conference rooms of various size for orientations, meetings and a multitude of other purposes. Natural lighting is emphasized with an uninterrupted circumference of exterior windows. Showers are available for employee, and three separate access points quickly provide customers with the information they need. The entire focus of the building is on efficiency and professionalism.

Rewards

Our agency rewards superior achievement through a multitude of recognition systems. Annual raises are based solely on performance with increases of up to 15 percent available to outstanding performers. Every quarter, plaques are given to special achievers with annual awards presented by the director for superior leadership and customer service. Our quarterly employee newsletter highlights these awards as well as letters of appreciation from our customers.

Supervisors throughout the department are encouraged to "catch their employees doing something right" by documenting an employee's special efforts on a "thank you" note that is signed by everyone upline (including the director) and included in the employees personnel file. We even hand out quarterly "spark-plug" awards for those cheerful souls who help us through another day.

Grooming existing and future leaders is a priority of most successful organizations. Our agency has put in place an extensive leadership development program in which participants are provided an opportunity to fine tune their leadership abilities through practice sessions utilizing events common to our everyday work environment. A total of 24 different training modules are being provided to every supervisor in the agency, from the director to local office unit supervisors.

None of the efforts discussed in this paper represent innovations in service delivery strategies. The concepts of customer service and participative management have been around for a long time. The more important point to be made is that decision makers in this country must come to recognize the fact that state Employment Security agencies throughout the nation are an important public asset. We have the systems, we have the professionals, and most importantly, we have the desire to be this nation's very best deliverer of services to the public.

Employ Illinois: an Economic Development and Human Services Initiative

By Robert A. Frank

The Wagner-Peyser amendments to the Job Training Partnership Act created the governor's 10-percent discretionary funds, commonly known as 7 (b) funds. This allowed the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) to develop formal agreements with other state agencies to provide job placement assistance services to their clients. These initial programs were with the Department of Corrections, the Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of Rehabilitation Services, and the Department on Aging.

After a few years of operating and evaluating the services of these programs, IDES wanted to expand the concept and services of these initial 7 (b) efforts. The Department wanted to intensify the job placement and employment-generating services throughout the state. It also was determined that a great need existed for additional labor market information, and this could be developed only by new methods. IDES felt that by including the job-ready clients of other human service agencies in its computerized job-matching systems, those individuals would have a greater potential for employment. By providing other agencies access to some of its computerized systems, IDES would be able to provide a better selection of applicants to the employer to help quickly fill job openings. Other agencies also needed more information on their clients after employment.

Robert A. Frank is manager, Program Planning and Management Analysis of the Illinois Department of Employment Security.

To do this, IDES established three goals:

1. Assist other agencies that are responsible for developing vocational training and economic development strategies by disseminating customized labor market information through new methodologies.
2. Expand the placement potential of all job-ready applicants, including clients of other state agencies.
3. Quickly fill employer job vacancies with the best qualified applicant.

To promote these goals, 10 components were developed to help place job-ready clients: Job Match, Reporting Systems, Job Order Access, Test Selection, Targeted Jobs Tax Credit, Recruitment, Job Service Resume System, Employment Tracking System, Illinois Economic Database, and Economic Development Demonstration Project.

Job match

IDES developed two computerized systems to facilitate the job-matching process statewide. The Computerized Job Order Retrieval System (COJORS) is an on-line file search that permits instant access to open job orders in the Illinois Job Bank as well as access to the Interstate Clearance System, a national job bank. The Applicant Retrieval System permits on-line access to applicants who have the skills and qualifications required by employers. Together these systems offer a sophisticated approach to matching job seekers with suitable employer openings.

IDES felt that both systems would be better utilized if the pool of qualified applicants and employment and training openings was enlarged. The opportunities for employers and applicants to locate the best qualified workers or to find suitable employment would improve proportionally as a result. State agencies were approached to increase the number of job-ready applicants they were referring to IDES and to place their job openings and training opportunities into the COJORS system.

Reporting systems

Agencies often want statistical feedback on services provided to their clients after referral to IDES. To provide this information, Employ Illinois developed a reporting system that informs other agencies of the number of key services provided by IDES to their clients. If an agency is interested in using this component, each applicant referred to an IDES local office is entered into the Applicant Retrieval System and coded so that selected characteristics, services, and activities can be reported monthly. The codes reflect which agency referred that client to the local office. The flexibility of the coding system allows not only state agencies, but also local agencies to be identified in the system.

Job order access

Under the Employ Illinois initiative, agencies may choose to install the Job Search System at their own locations. Job Search is a sophisticated computer system that allows jobseekers to use an on-line terminal to locate job openings. The system is updated daily with information about job opportunities from both private- and public-sector employers. Specific details about each job, including required education, experience, salary, and job location, are displayed on the terminals. The employer's name and address are suppressed.

Job Search is different from most computer applications in that the jobseeker does not use the computer terminal keyboard. A touch with a special light pen on the appropriate spot on the screen causes Job Search to respond to the user's request. Job Search guides the user through the process, one step at a time, using readily understandable language until an actual job order is selected. When a suitable match is found, the client is directed to the nearest IDES local office for referral to that job or appropriate employment related services.

To promote the use of Job Search, IDES will provide computer terminals on a 90-day trial basis without cost to other agencies to help the determine whether the system is useful to their services. This will help agencies without investing large amounts of resources in equipment purchases. Through May, 1990, 12 organizations have permanent Job Search Systems in their offices and five organizations have used the 90-day demonstration.

Test selection

Job performance during a trial period is an accurate method to determine a person's performance. Most employers, however, cannot afford the time or expense needed to train an individual only to find months later that performance is unsatisfactory. Testing has been used as a screening process to help predict job performance. A performance test may be used to measure a specific skill such as typing speed. An aptitude test, however, measures the ability or capacity to learn the job tasks. The aptitude test is used to predict a person's potential for acquiring vocational proficiency after appropriate training and experience.

The General Aptitude Test Battery (GATB) has been under continuous development by the United States Employment Service since 1943. It has been described as the test with the best research in linking scores to job performance. The GATB is used by IDES offices in response to employer requests for tested applicants. It also may be used for counseling purposes with the Occupational Aptitude Patterns that are derived from the test scores.

For many years, IDES has provided training to high schools, community colleges, and other state and local agencies on the administration and interpretation of GATB. Through the Employ Illinois initiative, a major effort has been developed to increase the use of GATB by other state agencies for their counseling programs.

Through this effort, state agencies and JTPA Service Delivery Areas have responded by requesting GATB training.

Targeted Jobs Tax Credit

The Targeted Jobs Tax Credit program was enacted to offer employers credits from certain federal income taxes for hiring individuals from certain target groups who have had difficulty in obtaining employment. TJTC is an elective income tax credit that can be applied to wages private employers pay to employees of target groups.

IDES has found the tax credit an attractive incentive for employers to hire applicants who might otherwise be difficult to place in employment. IDES is looking at the possibility of computerizing the vouchering system and allowing other state agencies to voucher their own clients through the system. Allowing other state agencies to participate in the TJTC process will increase the placement potential for their eligible clients. Increasing the pool of TJTC-eligible individuals will benefit more applicants and employers than have been possible previously, resulting in expanded economic benefits in Illinois.

Recruitment

In providing services to claimants and jobseekers, IDES utilizes sophisticated automated systems. These systems permit the prompt payment of benefits to those meeting Unemployment Insurance eligibility criteria and the matching of applicants to jobs.

These automated systems primarily devoted to IDES purposes, also are a potential source of information for agencies providing employment and training assistance. Under the Employ Illinois initiative, information from IDES files is available to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs in order for it to contact through mass mailings prospective clients who meet certain criteria for participation in JTPA programs.

Job Service Resume System

IDES and five neighboring states within the U.S. Department of Labor-Employment and Training Administration Region 5 have developed an automated system to better serve jobseekers in professional, technical, managerial and sales occupations. The Resume System is, in effect, a multi-state bank of skilled applicants. Using remote computer terminals each of the member states submits specially formatted resumes to the file or searches the databases for applicants who meet employer job specifications. When a job match is found, the member state prints off a resume that it sends to the employer for consideration. This system offers an excellent opportunity for clients experienced in these fields to broaden their job search and for employers to expand their search for qualified applicants.

Employment Tracking System

One component that is attracting a lot of attention is the Employment Tracking System (ETS). ETS is a longitudinal database containing up to seven years of information on a person's employment, unemployment and Job Service contact history for persons participating in educational, job training, or employment programs in Illinois. The ETS objective is to make available to public-funded employment and training programs a database that allows agencies to assess the impact of their training programs on the persons they have trained or assisted.

Most follow-up has been through mail survey or telephone inquiry and can be costly. ETS facilitates automated follow-up on a large number of clients. It assists agencies in evaluating the effectiveness of specific training programs, service delivery methods, and contracted service providers as reflected by such measures as increases in occupational skill level and wages earned. It also can be used to determine whether a relationship exists between the cost of training services and any increase in earnings that may have resulted from the job skills acquired in the training. Additionally, the Employment Tracking System can be used by an agency to determine its trainees' success in finding and keeping the job for which they were trained.

The ETS database draws on IDES' information systems and gathers data on employment, wages, and unemployment. The Employment Tracking System automatically tracks a person for five years after his/her Social Security Number is initially entered. In addition, the system provides a total of seven years of wage information on the database. ETS has been identified as the evaluation basis for many of the state's human service agencies. These agencies will have a valuable source of data in ETS to help them expand on program evaluation that will lead to improved services for their clients.

Illinois economic database

This component is a cooperative effort between IDES and a consortium of major labor market information users, including universities, city and state government, and other non-profit research entities. The primary function of the database is to provide information that identifies the job-generation components in growth and declining industries, and also to provide comprehensive business "birth" and "death" data for assessment of the state's economic strengths and performance.

The longitudinal database will draw on employment information collected by IDES. Once constructed, the database will have five years of employment and wage data. Additional data will be incorporated during the annual update process. Information from the database will allow in-depth analysis of:

1. Employment changes (growth and decline) by industry, location and size of firm.
2. The pattern of business formations and closures by industry, location, and size of firms.

The consortium represents public- and private-sector organizations with economic development and economic analysis concerns. IDES provides technical support, and the data used in creating the database. This database has many applications and benefits. It has the potential of providing industries with data needed to identify new markets. The same data will establish the framework necessary to predict changes in labor and industrial markets and to assess the effects of public/private policies on industrial development and job creation.

Economic Development Demonstration Project

To foster and expand economic development in Illinois, IDES continues to develop an array of products and services dedicated to serve the efforts of its sister agency, the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DCCA). The principal objective is to assist DCCA in promoting the economic stability and vitality of the Illinois private sector.

Using the research and analytical capability of IDES' Program and Planning Bureau, specialized forms of technical assistance are provided for state and local economic development efforts on a timely basis. The types of technical assistance are many and diverse. For example, this research can take the form of industrywide studies, labor force projections a decade or more into the future, a profile of a substate labor market area for local high technology and small business assistance centers, or updating and improving marketing presentations and written materials.

IDES embraced a comprehensive training program for DCCA staff who work on a daily basis with new and expanding business. Economic development staff market the advantages of operating a business in Illinois, whether its a large foreign-domestic joint venture or a small high technology entrepreneurial enterprise. Those who serve as Illinois' sales representatives must be sufficiently knowledgeable about the programs, products, and services of many state government agencies. For this reason, IDES is providing DCCA with training programs that pertain to virtually all aspects of the Unemployment Insurance program, the Job Service, Labor Market Information and Analysis, and methods for obtaining additional timely information from all IDES levels and divisions.

Employ Illinois is the Illinois Department of Employment Security's response to the greater demand required by an ever-growing constituency base for IDES itself and for other human service agencies. Employ Illinois is a flexible program that will develop new components as the need for additional services is required. An interagency user group has been formed to assist in the formulation of new directions for Employ Illinois and to increase the use of the present components. Employ Illinois maximizes the use of IDES resources to respond to the ever-growing needs of the labor market, human service agencies, and the employer community through cooperative efforts of everyone in the employment and training network in Illinois.

Job Centers Address Southeastern Pennsylvania's Changing Economy

by Frank Lynch and Jack McGettigan

Twelve new one-stop Job Centers in Southeastern Pennsylvania are helping the region's employers and workers adapt to changing economic conditions. Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry Secretary Harris Wofford said, "As is the case throughout the Commonwealth, the economy in Philadelphia, Delaware, Montgomery and surrounding counties is being challenged by foreign competition, by labor shortages in many occupations, and by almost daily technological advances in the workplace."

Gov. Robert P. Casey opened Pennsylvania's first Job Center in Erie in 1988, and by the end of 1989 more than 80 centers statewide were available to serve all Pennsylvania employers and workers. Pennsylvania's Job Centers, most of which are located in what had been called Job Service or "unemployment" offices, bring together for the first time a broad range of government and community employment-related programs to provide one-stop service. Most of these programs had operated separately in different parts of the community.

Frank Lynch and Jack McGettigan are professionals on the staff of the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry.

Keystone of economic development

"The economy of today, -- and certainly the economy of tomorrow -- demand that workers be well trained and skilled and that employers reach out in new ways to a changing work force," Wofford said. "In addition to helping workers who are starting out or starting over, Job Centers are a keystone of our economic development efforts because they provide employers with one local site and one pool of talent they must have if their businesses are to grow and prosper.

This dual role is particularly important here in the eastern part of the state, where jobless rates are relatively low and employment levels are high. Employers are finding that for many jobs it's extremely difficult to find employees with the skills they need. On the other side of the coin, there are still many people who can't find jobs or who are finding it difficult to improve their skills to get better jobs."

Wofford said that Job Centers are designed to address both problems, and to function equally well in areas of near-full employment and in areas of high unemployment. Pennsylvania's economy is opening a greater percentage of jobs in service industries. However, he said that Governor Casey has made special efforts to ensure that manufacturing remains a vital part of the economic base of the entire state. For instance, intervention by the State kept Mack Trucks' world headquarters and assembly operations in the Lehigh Valley, and kept Sharon Steel operating in Mercer County. Those efforts kept more than 6,000 Pennsylvanians working in high-paying manufacturing jobs.

Last year, Pennsylvania committed about $2.5 million in state assistance to enable Ford Motor Company to build a 687,580 square foot, electronics components facility in Montgomery County that will increase the company's productivity and preserve 2,400 Pennsylvania jobs that might otherwise have been lost. Despite this commitment to basic industries throughout the Commonwealth, a large percentage of job growth in this state is occurring in the service/technical industries, as well as in wholesale and retail trade, construction, finance and insurance. In the five-county region of southeastern Pennsylvania, composed of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties, the leading industry now is services, accounting for 27.6 percent of total non-agricultural jobs, up from 22.2 percent in 1980. Retail trade now accounts for 18.1 percent, up from 16.9 percent in 1980, while the manufacturing industry has declined from 28.4 percent in 1980 to the current 20.3 percent.

Labor mismatches exist

"Although Pennsylvania's jobless rate continues at historic low levels, dramatic differences in both employment levels and local economies exist from county to county, and sometimes from town to town," Wofford said. Situations of labor shortages and labor surpluses can exist at the same time in the same geographic region, and the extent of those regional differences is evident in the state.

County populations range from 346,800 people in Chester to 1,644,800 in Philadelphia County, the largest in the state. The number of employers fluctuates accordingly, from 8,808 in Chester to 25,215 in Philadelphia County. "Local economies vary as well," Wofford said, noting that nonmanufacturing industries account for 86.4 percent of all non-agricultural jobs in Philadelphia County, but 77 percent or less in Bucks, Chester and Montgomery.

On average, the unemployment rate for the five-county region is less than 3.3 percent below Pennsylvania's statewide average of 4.6 percent, and well below the then national rate of 5.3 percent. On a county-by-county basis, the unemployment rate varies from a high of 4.9 percent in Philadelphia County, slightly above the state average, to a low of 2.4 percent in Chester, the lowest unemployment rate recorded among all 67 counties in Pennsylvania.

In an effort to deal most effectively with this varied economic picture, Governor Casey in 1987 appointed a task force on job training and education that recommended the formation of the Pennsylvania Job Center Network. Each of the Job Centers offers one-stop service for a wide rang of job training, placement, rehabilitation, social services and community-based programs. Each Job Center is organized locally with the help of a task force drawn from employers, labor, school districts, colleges, job training agencies, industrial development organizations, social service agencies, Chambers of Commerce and other groups committed to a better employment climate.

Services shaped to locality

Each Job Center provides a core of employment-related services and information, including job training, education, counseling and placement, unemployment compensation benefits, adult and youth education and literacy programs, and information on day care and community service opportunities. Each local task force shapes Job Center services according to the needs of the community.

State agencies represented include: the Department of Labor and Industry's Job Service and bureaus of Unemployment Compensations, Job Training and Apprenticeship and Training; Office of Vocational Rehabilitation; the Governor's Veterans Outreach and Assistance Center; and the state departments of Public Welfare and Education.

Meeting Human Resource Needs: Maryland Job Service Local Office Innovations

By Paulette Hall

"The U.S. is going through not just an age of transition but an age of transformation: not just a change in degree but a change in kind...a historic era comparable only to the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution.

"The first observation that comes to mind is that the human resource has become the new strategic resource, replacing land labor, and capital, the strategic resources of the old industrial economy.

The above suggests that the single most important agency in the U.S. government in the coming decade will be the labor department, and specifically, the Employment Service."[1]

Paul Shay

The Maryland Department of Economic and Employment Development's (DEED) Job Service recognizes the significance of Paul Shay's statement concerning the role that human resources play in keeping Maryland competitive in national and international markets.[2] Working under DEED's mission, "Jobs for People and People for Jobs," and the "Do It Now" mandate of Gov. William Donald Schaefer, the Maryland Job Service has accepted the challenge. Innovations have been

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developed to maximize human resources and to increase responsiveness to the needs of local jurisdictions. These needs are being met through coordination with traditional partners, such as Job Training Partnership Act, Service Delivery Areas, Private Industry Councils, and employer groups such as Job Service Employer Committees, as well as with such non-traditional partners as the court system.

The Maryland Job Service and the Job Services in other states have accepted the challenge of increasing placement transactions while providing more comprehensive services for the development of human resources. This is being accomplished by streamlining systems through local planning and by developing automated processes. The above has resulted in productivity increases despite funding reductions experienced over the past years.

The Job Service's ability to respond to changing times by increasing the system's productivity is a national issue. The following discussion outlines national and state perspectives on this issue. The state's perspective will lead to a discussion of the Maryland Job Service's local innovative projects. The projects target the Job Service system as a whole and certain applicant groups in particular.

The federal perspective

In 1985, an International Association of Personnel in Employment Security publication noted that "the three-part ES system, though repeatedly proven to be a wise expenditure of government funds, is coming under attack more now that at any other time in its long and proud history."[3] Since that time, studies of the Job Service have included: **Assessment of the Implementation and Effects of the JTPA Title V Wagner-Peyser Amendments**; Department of Labor hearings held in 1987 on the role of the Employment Service;[4] **Employment Service-Variations in Local Office Performance,** conducted by the General Accounting Office in 1989; **The Employment Service Information Exchange Forums**, conducted by the Employment and Training Institute for the Department of Labor in 1989; and the 1989 study conducted by the National Commission for Employment Policy. All of these studies point out what has occurred in the ES system over the past several years.

Being under close scrutiny is nothing new for the ES system. Many studies were conducted during the 1960s and early 1970s as demands for human resource development evolved. The critique by Ruttenberg and Gutchess outlined seven principles for an effective manpower service system: 1) the organization must have a clear purpose understood and accepted by all; 2) communities wishing to provide manpower services must have freedom of choice; 3) implementation of a national manpower policy demands strong federal direction and control of the manpower service system, i.e. a reassertion, reassumption, and retention of federal leadership in the federal-state partnership; 4) the manpower service system must be responsive to differing local conditions and needs; 5) manpower policy cannot be developed or executed in a vacuum; 6) there must be provisions for a continual flow of new talent into the manpower service system; and 7) the establishment and maintenance of a public manpower service system as a public responsibility.[5]

Again, we have a call for the review of the Job Service. On Oct. 26, 1989, Secretary of Labor Elizabeth Dole stated that America faces a work force crisis, and she announced a seven-point program to improve the nation's ability to provide workers with the skills industry needs. Secretary Dole said,

> *"The fact is that, as we enter the last decade of this century, America faces a work force crisis. Simply put, America's work force is in a state of unreadiness...unready for the new jobs, unready for the new realities, unready for the new challenges of the 90s."*

One of the points in Secretary Dole's seven point plan includes: "Meetings with governors and employers to refocus the federal-state Employment Service system from its role in an era of labor surpluses to one of labor shortages."[6]

Secretary Dole recognizes the need to match employment requirements with worker skills and the role the Job Service has to play in facilitating the match. Despite this, the Bush Administration's request for $722.6 million to fund critical Employment Service programs in Fiscal Year 1991 is $127.4 million or 15 percent, below the Interstate Conference of Employment Security Agencies' request level and 7.2 percent below the FY '90 appropriation of $779 million.[7]

The Employment Service system has been studied and restudied over the past 30 years. What the system needs, as suggested by Ruttenberg and Gutchness, is funding support and a clear federal mandate regarding its mission and goals. Reducing funds, while the need for Job Service activities is on the upswing, will be counter productive to the goals outlined by Secretary Dole.

State perspective

Maryland policymakers, like their federal partners, also have initiated studies concerning the Maryland Job Service. The 1982 amendments to the Wagner-Peyser Act gave the ES the ability to be more flexible in service delivery. Maryland was fortunate to be one of the states that received increased funds; however, the Maryland Job Service was one of the lowest performers in terms of productivity under the federal productivity measurement system used prior to the enactment of the amendments. Armed with increased flexibility and additional revenues in 1982 and 1983, the state began to study the system for enhancing performance. Steps initiated were: a contract with the University of Maryland Center for Quality and Productivity to develop performance standards; a study, commissioned with the University of Maryland-Baltimore County, on the effectiveness of the Maryland Job Service; a review by the Governor's Employment and Training Council, which led to localization recommendations; and the Department of Labor-ES 2000 Grant, which targeted increased participation by employers in Job Service planning at the local level.

The results of these studies led to the initiation or the continuation of innovative practices in local offices.

Maryland Job Service local office innovations

This section highlights projects developed to streamline the Maryland Job Service system, increasing coordination and productivity.

The Maryland Job Service office in Baltimore is the largest in the state. An average of 15,000 jobseekers register there each year. In 1982, the Baltimore office had one of the lowest productivity rates in the state. When the Department of Labor approached Maryland to demonstrate the self-registration process, the Baltimore office was selected because of a need to reduce staff resources used in the registration process and to increase resources for job matching and employer services.

A one-time-only $5,000 Department of Labor grant was received to revise the Job Service 511 (application form) and to purchase a brochure. However, it was evident to local office management and staff that they would have to revise the way they were conducting office operations if the self-registration process was to be effective. The system was initiated in April, 1983, and it is still utilized today. The system's success can be attributed to management's willingness to involve staff in planning the system's revisions and staff willingness to make changes.

An additional project, the appointment system, was implemented in October, 1985. The appointment system assisted the office in further streamlining its operations. Each office was allowed to determine whether it wanted to use an appointment system, and was allowed to develop the process in accordance with local needs.

The self-registration and appointment system processes used by the Baltimore office and the statewide computerization of the applicant and job-bank systems have streamlined the up-front process of registration, and consequently, provided more time for the job-match process. The appointment system also reduced the time applicants waited for service. The time saved allowed staff to work with clients who needed hands-on assistance and provided them with more time to work with employers.

The above systems also have assisted in fostering increased coordination by allowing the Baltimore office to reassign staff to Service Delivery Area offices, thereby providing direct services to JTPA eligible clients in the Cherry Hill area of Baltimore at the local Community Service Center. The processes also have resulted in increased placement productivity from a low of 2,708 in 1981, to 7,500 in Program Year 1989. During 1981-82, there were four referrals for every placement. Currently, there is an average of 2 1/2 referrals for every placement. This dramatic increase in productivity has occurred despite a reduction in staff.

Multi-state demonstration project

Previously, outreach to Fort Meade and Aberdeen military installations had been a part of the Veteran Transition Services Program. However, the Multi-state Project allows local Job Service offices to provide on-line access of job opening information to military and nonmilitary personnel on a daily basis through self-service terminals installed at the military installations. These were the first on-line terminals placed in locations other than Job Service offices. The centers provide service personnel with sufficient vocational guidance to allow them to make informed career choices before leaving active duty. The program provides all jobseekers with the ability to direct their own labor-exchange activities with limited staff assistance by using the multi-state job bank system. Jobseekers can search for jobs in a larger metropolitan multi-state labor market and eliminate the need to visit Employment Service offices.

The Fort Meade project is staffed by Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOPs) specialists, and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) from Job Service offices in Glen Burnie and Annapolis and a Wagner-Peyser-funded staff person from Annapolis. These staff are collocated with civilians employed by the Federal Central Personnel Office.

Initially, the Aberdeen project was staffed by a veteran who was hired under a contract funded by the Wagner-Peyser grant. Due to lack of funds the position was terminated. However, as a result of increased funding under the LVER grant a permanent veterans' program staff member will be assigned to work on the project on a full-time basis.

Thus far, the Fort Meade and Aberdeen projects have a combined registration of 1,600 persons, 1,100 counseling services have been provided, and 438 registrants have entered employment.

These innovative projects demonstrate Job Service responsiveness in providing services to military personnel. With the expanding needs of the civilian labor market and the continued downsizing of the United States military in Europe and at home, it is increasingly important to ensure an efficient and effective transition to civilian life for military personnel and their dependents. Toward that end, the Maryland Job Service, in conjunction with the University of Maryland, currently is developing its "European Job Connection" project. In May, 1990, two of Maryland's veterans' staff participated in a Job Fair in Heidelberg, Germany. The staff returned with resumes from 300 military personnel and their dependents who are interested in working in Maryland. Since the Job Fair, another 80 pieces of correspondence were received from military personnel in Europe. Each of these individuals were assigned to a case manager who will correspond with them until they return to the United States.

enrolled and are eligible to receive individual and group counseling, vocational evaluation, job development and referral services. In addition, the program offers a high level of counseling and assessment service, which is provided by the Job Service counselor.

As a result of their work with APP participants, the staff has determined that participants are part of a population that has multiple problems and needs extensive services and support groups. In addition, despite the obvious need for vocational and other types of training, the participants tend to be more interested in locating immediate employment rather than training that could provide a higher future earnings base.

During the period between September, 1986 - June, 1990, 265 absent parents registered for the program, and 201 have entered employment.

Increased employer input

Under the direction of the Job Service Employer Committee (JSEC) chair for the Job Service office in Wheaton, several projects to streamline local office operations and to increase services to employers have been initiated. The Tracor Upload Project is a joint employer-Job Service endeavor to facilitate employers' access to the automated job bank. It is a software package that enables an employer to place specific job orders on a special disk and mail it to the nearest Job Service office for entry into the Job Service's state-of-the-art computerized, job-matching system. Using Tracor disks, those employers enjoy immediate dissemination of their job orders across the entire state, posting of the orders nationwide in the National Job Bank, and the ability to write a "custom made" job order.

The project also enables the Office of Employment Services to be more efficient in bringing jobs to people and people to jobs. The system saves time that Job Service staff usually spent in receiving the job order, converting the data into the job order format, and entering it into the data base. This system also benefits the employer by eliminating telephone time spent with Job Service personnel.

The system was developed by personnel at Tracor, a multi-national company with operations from California to Maryland and Virginia. Originally, Tracor provided its job order information by computer tape. Later, at the request of smaller employers, it modified the system for use on floppy disks. Tracor currently sends its job order information to the Job Service office in Wheaton through a modem hook-up. This methodology is in the pilot project stage.

Mini job fairs

Initiated in February, 1989, the Mini Job Fair is a method of bringing many applicants and employers together in one arena at the same time. It is designed to operate in available space in local offices. The procedure requires that applicants be notified of the date and time of the Mini Job Fair through the use of ads that list participating employers. Ideally, there should be enough employers participating to provide applicants with a "mix" of potential job opportunities. Through the use of a check stuffer card, Unemployment Insurance claimants also are notified of upcoming job fairs.

The Mini Job Fair concept exposes more applicants to more employers at one time than through any other local office opportunity to select from a pool of variable-skilled applicants. They have become a successful recruiting tool for Job Service Employer Committee member companies. Initial response to the fairs has been overwhelming, and the office has a waiting list of employers wishing to participate. The Mini Job Fair concept can be modified to serve special target groups, such as youth or welfare clients.

Approximately 30 employers have participated in each job fair. Local Job Service staff complete the initial applicant screening process. The five fairs held in Wheaton resulted in service to approximately 1,000 applicants and 100 employers. Of the 1,000 applicants, 350 were UI claimants.

Corridor Employment and Training Center

This center is operated jointly by the College Park Job Service office and the Prince George's County Private Industry Council. The Corridor Employment and Training Center opened on June 5, 1989, as the result of efforts made by the Baltimore-Washington Corridor Chamber of Commerce.

The Corridor Employment and Training Center office is unique in that it is staffed by members from the Job Service office in College Park and the Prince George's County Private Industry Council under the guidance of the Baltimore-Washington Corridor Chamber of Commerce and an employer advisory board. The office is a model of public-private partnerships in action. Additionally, the Baltimore-Washington Corridor Chamber of Commerce provided funding for the first year's lease through corporate donations.

The center is available for career assessment, job matching, testing, training, labor market information, employer conferences, and veteran services. A resume file is available to employers. All Job Service activities and all Private Industry Council services are available. The office reports the following activity from its opening until June, 1990: job orders, 249; job openings, 775; applicants registered, 449; Entered Employment, 310; and Entered Training, 9.

Summary

The material presented has highlighted Maryland's and the federal government's perspectives on performance improvements and responsiveness, which are needed as the Job Service adjusts its role in response to changes in economic conditions, applicants' needs, labor market trends, and other factors. The innovations instituted by the Maryland Job Service demonstrate that it is responding to those needs by streamlining its systems and targeting special applicant groups. However, continued reductions in federal funding levels will reduce Maryland's capacity to continue these successful projects and initiatives.

Notes

1. William Tracy, "The Employment Service Information and Exchange Forums" (New Jersey: Employment and Training Institute, 1989), pg.v
2. The Department of Economic and Employment Development was established by Gov. William Donald Schaefer in 1987, by merging the Department of Employment and Training with the Department of Economic and Community Development. J. Randall Evans is Secretary, and Charles O. Middlebrooks is the Assistant Secretary for the Division of Employment and Training.
3. "A Proud Tradition of Quality Service"' International Association of Personnel in Employment Security, 1985, p. 1.
4. The terms Employment Service and Job Service are synonymous.
5. Stanley H. Ruttenburg and Jocelyn Gutchess, **The Federal-State Employment Service: A Critique** (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), pp. 84 - 86.
6. U.S. Department of Labor, "Secretary Dole Sees Workforce Crisis...Announces Seven Point Skills Reform, Plan", News (Washington, DC, Office of Information, Oct, 1989).
7. "Preparing for the 1990 Midyear meeting - Action Memorandum" Interstate Conference of Employment Security Administrators, Feb, 1990.
8. "Joint Chairman's Report on the Maryland Job Service," House Appropriations Committee and Senate Budget and Tax Committee, 1989, p.10. (Typewritten)

Model Offices in Model Communities

by A. R. Little

A "model office" is more than activity within four walls. It is a group of dedicated staff committed to providing needed services promptly and effectively to the community. California's Employment Development Department (EDD) believes that our state has a number of model offices and model activities, each providing needed services to their customer and their communities.

We have found there is no single office or community model that will best meet all local needs. However, we best enhance our community by incorporating these features:

- We need to understand and respond to customer needs.
- We need to work together with other related service providers.
- Our services and information must be accessible to our customers -- employers, jobseekers, claimants, and the public in general.
- We must use our communication technology and automated tools to the hilt.

A.R. Little retired from the California Employment Development Department in 1989. He was an EDD senior planner.

What do our customers want and get?

Knowing and responding to our many customers is as much a challenge for EDD, the largest state Employment Security agency, as it is for any large bureaucracy. Opening and maintaining two-way communications between California's 812,000 employers, a state work force of 14.8 million and our own 12,000 employees has been our first challenge. These are some of our varied successes in responding to our customers needs.

The department actively works with local Employer Advisory Groups and employer organizations, with claimants, and with jobseekers. In the last several years, for example, employers were asked to help with, and now eagerly participate in, the redesign of our benefit tax forms and procedures. The forms are easier to use, and instructions are easier to follow. The payoff is for all of us because this means the employers correctly complete the forms before sending them to us.

We are developing a useful and "client-friendly" **Unemployment Insurance Handbook** for claimants. Our clients, labor unions, and other members of the public are invited to participate. We know how critical understanding of claimant rights and responsibilities is because these benefits provide subsistence income while the individual is looking for, or training for, new work. We look forward to completion of this revised handbook. We already have had great success with a similar client handbook for California's Disability Insurance claimants.

As part of the department's outreach to employers and community groups, we provide speaker kits for local office managers and staff use. These kits assure that all audiences are receiving concise, consistent, and current information. The kits contain speaker tips and an overview of the department's programs, mission, and goals. For instance, in our tax program, kits include specific information on such topics as the registration information for new employers, the "underground economy" (employers paying cash wages "under the table" to avoid benefit taxes), benefit overpayment collections, and tax audit procedures.

Displaced workers and other jobseekers need information on the skill requirements of potential careers. The California Occupational Search System (COSS) is the tool we have developed for career exploration, skill transfer, vocational counseling, placement and job-search activities, and job development. COSS is based on research that test validated relationships of individuals' aptitudes and capabilities to more than 12,000 occupations. COSS includes: projections of employment levels both by industry and occupation; occupational structure of industries; and cross references between the **Dictionary of Occupational Titles** (DOT) and other systems such as the **Guide for Occupational Exploration**, the **Classification of Instructional Programs**, and the U.S. Office of Education.

Many experienced, unemployed professionals who have previously enjoyed relatively stable careers are again in the job market looking for high-skilled, high-paying jobs because of layoffs, plant closures, and mergers. Most have not had any recent experience looking for work. They are not well prepared with job seeking information or skills. Many feel stressed because of unemployment.

California's "Experience Unlimited (EU)" job clubs started in California 30 years ago but really came of age in 1987. An EU job club is a voluntary, self-directed employment search affiliation of a professional, managerial, and technically skilled jobseekers. EU members work as volunteers in EDD offices helping themselves and their peers to develop and to produce resumes, to develop interview skills, to solicit job orders from companies, to screen and to refer the best qualified members to job orders, and to provide much needed peer support. We are proud of our EU program, and our EU "graduates" have come back as employers themselves to place job orders with EDD.

Special services through innovative use of funds

California uses its Wagner-Peyser governor's discretionary funds to test innovative service delivery concepts. Experience Unlimited began as a discretionary fund pilot. Three current examples of Wagner-Peyser funded projects are BUILD, IMPACT and YEOP.

The Better Utilization of Individual Lifestyle Development (BUILD) project was developed and implemented with the strong support of California State Assembly member Maxine Waters. The program was designed to meet the specific needs of economically disadvantaged residents of South Central Los Angeles housing projects. Many of the residents have major employability barriers such as low reading and math skills, lack of transportation and child care, limited job skills and work history, and a lack of motivation to seek employment.

The project provides a four-day, preemployment and motivational seminar specifically designed to meet the needs of persons living in housing projects. These workshops are followed by in-depth counseling, remediation classes (if needed), and intensive job development. The workshops are designed to motivate participants to break through the surrounding violence and poverty to get jobs.

The Innovative Military Projects and Career Training (IMPACT) program recruits, trains, and provides job placement services to unskilled and marginally skilled minority, inner-city youth -- many of whom are undecided about their careers or are unaware of career options. While the service provider is the state's military department, recruitment into the military is only one of the options open to the participants. For youth between the ages 17-21, benefits also may include training, counseling, job placement, or continued education in other setttings.

The Youth Employment Opportunity Program (YEOP) is a smashing success in its first year! We recognize that the preparation of at-risk youth for participation in the labor market is an essential investment in our future and the future of our nation. We also recognize that we alone cannot solve the spectrum of problems facing today's youth. However, we can provide the initiative. The Youth Employment Opportunity Program was initiated by EDD through a consortium of Los Angeles County leaders from industry and the corporate world, schools, and community organizations.

The program employs youth between ages 15-22 to provide intensive job services to other at-risk youth. These young peer counselors refer "their" clients to possible job openings, counsel them in job-hunting skills, contact employers on their behalf, and provide them with job leads. EDD staff, acting as mentors, assist the young people in planning client services for their peers. YEOP has proven that at-risk youth can provide quality employment services to a previously disregarded but important segment of our population.

Working together -- united we stand

California's 1990 Job Service plan states, "We must continue to strengthen our partnerships and use the combined efforts and resources to Californians."[1] We have found a need to work together to best rise to the challenge of a changing labor market. Changes we all face include new industries, modern technologies requiring different and more specialized worker skills, new immigrant/refugee populations needing language education and job training, workers who must be prepared to make three or four career changes during their worklife to keep up with rapid and continuing industry changes, workers from declining industries who need new directions, and educational infrastructure that must catch up with the knowledge and skill demands employers require for new and changing occupations.

Implementation of the Job Training Partnership Act witnessed several years of turf battles over presumptive roles between state Employment Service offices and individual JTPA Service Delivery Areas (SDA). Today we are working together "to provide the best possible coordination of services to our clients."[2] Top EDD policy makers and SDA executives have agreed to work together to recognize and celebrate cooperative local relationships, processes, and best practices. We are developing a video, showcasing the best three or four local examples and written summaries of all of our "best practices" to be shared statewide. An upcoming statewide conference will bring together for the first time all manager and administrators in the Job Service/JTPA programs in California.

One of our best collaborative efforts is based on the notion of industry-focused services. The Aerospace Network office is a joint venture of EDD with major aerospace employers, local JTPA and Private Industry Councils, and several local education and training agencies. It officially opened after a year of careful planning with industry representatives and local officials. This new office is the first such industry-specific human resources office in the nation. The sponsoring areospace firms include seven of the nation's largest Department of Defense prime contractors.

A key objective of the Network is to provide the capacity to effectively respond to the cyclical nature of employment trends in the defense industry -- finding workers for vacant jobs and jobs for displaced workers. The network's services ensure that the skilled but dislocated workers in the industry have ready access to new jobs with area employers who can best use their skills and experience. EDD enhanced industry-related DOT codes to better define specific skills and experiences to better refer workers to jobs. Employers share the resource load - operating funds and staff -- and profit from the Network's success.

Because of the Areospace Network's success, EDD has expanded the concept and focused on other industries within the state -- electronics, hospitality, and finance and banking. The Electronics Industry Human Resources Network in Santa Clara County is modeled after the Aerospace Network, with one major difference. The Areospace Network is comprised of a few major employers; whereas, the electronics industry network is composed of more than 300 firms, large and small. Our hospitality office is located in booming Southern California, successfully directing workers to new and expanding hotels and restaurants in the area. The Finance and Banking Network is in the developmental stage.

Unlocking doors -- the skeleton key is ready access to information

Clearly our customers need physical access. Equally as clear, our customers need information to make good decisions. The innovative State/Local Cooperative Labor Market Information program is a collaborative effort with our partners in California's employment and training community including local agencies, the California Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, and employers, to develop local occupational information. The program now covers half of the state's counties and more than 70 percent of California's labor force. Local data is collected on wages (including earnings of entry and experienced workers), fringe benefits, hiring requirements, recruitment practices, short-term outlook, and locally specified topics.

Both the state and local partners have specific responsibilities in this program. The state determines program policies and responsibilities, establishes research methods, and provides the tools, training and technical assistance to conduct the program. In turn, the local partners hold community meetings to determine local information needs and then gather, analyze, and disseminate data that meets those needs. Through this partnership, the program produces reliable occupational information at a reasonable cost, meets varied local needs for information, and reduces duplicative efforts to collect data. Among the major users of this Labor Market Information are community colleges, vocational rehabilitation counselors, and economic development planners. There is a legislative proposal to expand the state /local program statewide to provide 5-year industry/occupational projections every other year and annual occupational studies in all labor market areas.

With help from Nevada, EDD has developed and installed a personal computer supported database containing current state, substate, and national LMI. The California Economic Database System (CEDS) permits users with a modem, anywhere in the country, to quickly access the very latest in a wide variety of labor market data. The system, which is updated monthly, is specifically designed for California businesses, libraries and schools. For the future, we plan to combine the occupational information from the state/local LMI program with CEDS in order to provide the widest possible access to all interested parties.

Perhaps our most far-reaching attempt to provide information when and where it is needed is California's Job-Match system. It has the capability to electronically match, statewide, qualified jobseekers with employers' job orders. Employers will place job orders more quickly to know during, or soon after, the first phone call whether there are applicants who meet their needs, whether they have access to applicants across the state, and whether to potentially minimize their Unemployment Insurance Tax contributions because of a more effective work test and prescreening.

Job applicants will be considered for job openings that match their skills and abilities. They will be able to save time and money by not having to come repeatedly to an office to check on jobs, by having access to openings across the state, and by being able to complete a single application in order to use job services anywhere in the state.

High technology tools serve our staff and our customers

Former EDD Director Kiddoo (1983-90) believed that it is necessary to make an investment today to meet tomorrow's responsibilities. Supported by this vision, technological innovation in California has progressed by almost geometric proportions. Many of the preceding examples have been supported by our automated tools. Departmental automation has enabled the department, in keeping with the public trust, to make the best possible use of the (shrinking) available public resources. We use automated tools to consolidate information about our customers, to eliminate routine tasks, to redirect staff to improved customer service, and to move out of the office and into our customer's world.

The Single Client Database (SCDB) reflects the department's effort to consolidate services and make better use of the vast amounts of information available about the department's Job Service, and Unemployment and Disability Insurance clients. Information on a client is entered once. Updated information on a client is entered once. Updated information is available automatically in all program files. (Information now is available on the SCDB for Job Service and Disability Insurance clients. Unemployment Insurance clients will be added to the data base starting in mid-1991.)

EDD currently operates a statewide claims-paying process through Central Authorization Centers for California residents claiming UI benefits. A laser scanner, bar-code reader enters claims, providing lower claims entry costs and faster service to clients. The reduction in professional staff time required for processing routine entry data has allowed staff to turn efforts to better client services where special handling is required, such as claims with out-of-pattern answers requiring clarification, adjudication, or employer rulings.

Our next step will be to test the feasibility of completely eliminating paper processing. Fully automating the certification process through the use of such techniques as digital imaging will be tested in the near future. Although significant time and commitment are required to accomplish this effort, we expect it will serve to increase both the efficiency and effectiveness of our state's UI system.

Department tax auditors are finding that the use of lap-top computers not only improves their efficiency, but also improves their working relationship with employers. Tax auditors take lap-top computers to an employer's work-site, using computer programs for worksheets, ledgers, and other spread sheets developed by line staff themselves. Manual reconciliation back at the office is a thing of the past. Employers and auditors now can review jointly computer-generated audit findings immediately. In some cases, on-site audit findings even have resulted in immediate payment of taxes due.

Increased productivity paid for the cost of the computers within the first five months of use. There also are plans to use lap-tops with modems to interface with mainframe tax accounting files and to transmit completed audits to the central office. The successful introduction of lap-tops for tax audits is soon likely to lead to other applications, including program audits and evaluations.

California is working hard to apply what it has learned about model activities and effective local services. We would be pleased to share information about any of these projects and programs. For further information write to: Employment Development Department, Planning Office, MIC 21, 800 Capital Mall, Sacramento,CA, 95814.

Notes

1. California State Job Service Plan, Program Year 1990, pg. 2.

2. California Training Institute, Roles and Responsibilities Workgroup Process Report, May, 1990.

A New Partnership

Volume 6 of *Perspective: essays and reviews of issues in Employment Security and employment and training programs* marks an end. This will be the last journal published solely under the name of the International Association of Personnel in Employment Security.

More importantly, this also marks the beginning of a partnership between I.A.P.E.S. and the Interstate Conference of Employment Security Agencies (ICESA), the Washington, DC, based organization that represents the administrators of employment and training services, unemployment insurance and labor market information programs in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. I.A.P.E.S. and ICESA will publish jointly a revised, semiannual journal.

The new publication will review today's labor market concerns and the employment and training network's responses to these service imperatives. It will be published twice each year in June and December. The selection of topics and authors will be guided by an editorial board. I.A.P.E.S. members and state Employment Security agencies will retain the opportunity to submit professional papers.

For more information on the new publication please contact either Gary Crossley, labor market information director, ICESA, 202/628-5588, or Michael R. Stone, executive director, I.A.P.E.S., 502/223-4459.

Both organizations are looking forward to this new partnership. They hope it will lead to better understanding of America's work force needs and the employment and training network. It also is intended to support the Employment Security system and the professionals that make it work.

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